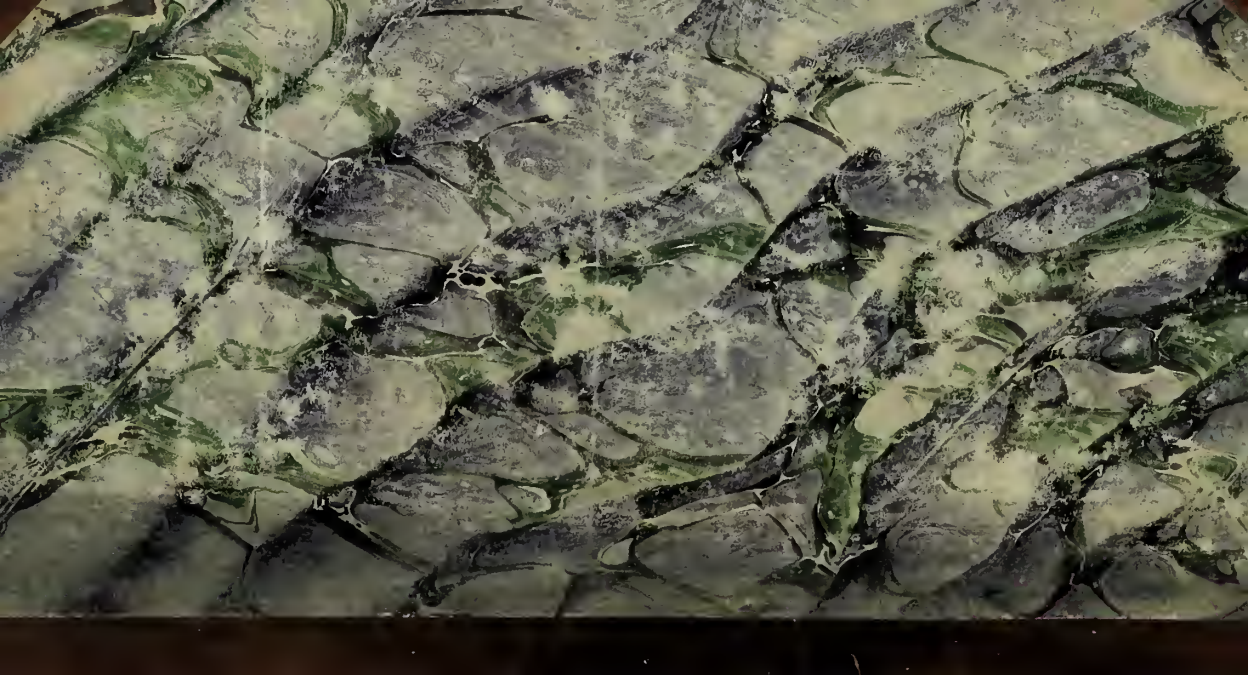

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THE

WORKS

OF THE

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A farther APPEAL

To MEN of

REASON *and* RELIGION.

PART II.

I. 1. IT is not my prefent defign to touch on any particular *opinions*, whether they are right or wrong; nor on any of thofe fmaller points of practice, which are variouſly held by men of different perfuaſions: but firſt, to point out ſome things which on *common* principles are condemned by men of every denomination, and yet found in all; and ſecondly, ſome wherein thoſe of each denomination, are more particularly inconſiſtent with *their own* principles.

And, firſt, it is my deſign, abſtracting from *opinions* of every kind, as well as from diſputa-

ble points of practice, to mention such of those things as occur to my mind, which are on *common* principles condemned, and notwithstanding found, more or less, among men of every denomination.

2. But before I enter on this unpleasing task, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, by whatever love you bear to God, to your country, to your own souls; do not consider *who* speaks, but *what* is spoken. If it be possible, for one hour lay prejudice aside; give what is advanced a fair hearing. Consider simply on each head, Is this true, or is it false? Is it reasonable, or is it not? If you ask, "But in whose judgment?" I answer, in your own; I appeal to the light of your own mind. Is there not a faithful witness in your own breast? By this you must stand or fall. You cannot be judged by another man's conscience. Judge for yourself by the best light you have. And the merciful God teach me and thee whatsoever we know not!

Now, as I speak chiefly to those who believe the scriptures, the method I propose is this, first, To observe what account is given therein of the *Jews*, the ancient church of God, inasmuch as *all these things were written for our instruction*, who say, we are *now* the visible church of the God of *Israel*. Secondly, To appeal to all who profess to be members thereof, to every one who is called a Christian, how far, in each instance,

ſtance, the parallel holds? And how much *we* are better than *they?*

3. Firſt, I am to obſerve what account the ſcriptures give of the *Jews*, the ancient church of God. I mean, with regard to their moral character; their tempers and outward behaviour.

No ſooner were they brought out of *Egypt*, than we find them *murmuring againſt* God, (Exod. xiv. 12.) Again, when he had juſt brought them through the *Red Sea with a mighty hand and ſtretched out arm*, (chap. xv. 24.) And yet again, quickly after, in the wilderneſs of *Zin, your murmurings* (ſaith *Moſes*) *are not againſt us, but againſt the* Lord. (chap. xvi. 8.) Nay, even while he was *giving them bread from heaven*, they were ſtill *murmuring and tempting* God, (chap. xviii. 2, 3.) and their amazing language at that ſeaſon was, *Is the* Lord *among us or not?* (chap. xvii. 4.)

The ſame ſpirit they ſhewed, during the whole forty years, that he *bore their manners in the wilderneſs:* a ſolemn teſtimony whereof, *Moſes ſpake in the ears of all the congregation of Iſrael*, when God was about to take him away from their head; *They have corrupted themſelves* (ſaith he) *their ſpot was not of his children; they are a perverſe and crooked generation. The* Lord *led Jacob about; he inſtructed him; he kept him as the apple of his eye*, (Deut. xxxii. 5, 10.) *He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increaſe of the fields: then he for-*

ſook God *which made him, and lightly eſteemed the rock of his ſalvation,* (chap. v. 11, 13, 15.)

In like manner God complains long after this, *Hear O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I have nouriſhed and brought up children, and they have rebelled againſt me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib: but Iſrael doth not know, my people doth not conſider. Ah ſinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a ſeed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they have forſaken the* Lord, *they have provoked the Holy One of Iſrael,* (Iſaiah i. 2, 3, 4.) *Can a maid forget her ornaments, and a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number,* (Jer. ii. 32.)

4. And *as they did not like to retain* God *in their knowledge,* ſo they had ſmall regard to the ordinances of God. *Even from the days of your fathers,* (ſaith God by his prophets) *ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them,* (Mal. iii. 7.) *Ye have ſaid, it is vain to ſerve God; and, what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances?* (ver. 14.) *Thou haſt not called upon me, O Jacob, but thou haſt been weary of me, O Iſrael: Thou haſt not brought me my burnt-offerings, neither haſt thou honoured me with thy ſacrifices,* (Iſaiah xliv. 22, 23.) And ſo the prophet himſelf confeſſes, *Thou meeteſt thoſe that remember thee in thy ways—But there is none that calleth upon thy name, that ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold of thee,* (Iſaiah lxiv. 5, 7.)

5. But

5. But they called upon his name by vain oaths, by perjury and blaſphemy. So *Jeremiah*, *Becauſe of ſwearing the land mourneth*, (chap. xxiii. 10.) *And though they ſay, the Lord liveth, ſurely they ſwear falſely*, (chap. v. ii.) So *Hoſea*, *They have ſpoken words, ſwearing falſely in making a covenant:* So *Ezekiel*, *They ſay the Lord ſeeth us not, the Lord hath forſaken the earth.* So *Iſaiah*, *Their tongue and their doings are againſt the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory.* (chap. iii. 8.) *They ſay, Let him make ſpeed and haſten his work that we may ſee it, and let the counſel of the Holy One draw nigh and come that we may know it*, (chap. v. 19.) And ſo *Malachi*, *Ye have wearied the Lord with your words*; *ye ſay, every one that doeth evil, is good in the ſight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them*; and *where is the* God *of judgment?* (chap. ii. 17.)

6. And as they *deſpiſed his holy things*, ſo they *prophaned his ſabbaths*, (Ezek. xxii. 8.) Yea, when God ſent unto them, ſaying, *Take heed unto yourſelves, and bear no burden on the ſabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the ſabbath day, as I commanded your fathers:—Yet they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck ſtiff, that they might not hear nor receive inſtruction.* (Jer. xvii. 21, 22, 23.)

Neither did they honour their parents, or thoſe whom God from time to time appointed to be rulers over them. *In thee* (in *Jeruſalem*, ſaith the prophet) *they have ſet light by father and mother*, (Ezek. xii. 7.) And from the very day

when God brought them up out of the land of *Egypt*, their murmurings, chiding, rebellion and disobedience; against those whom he had chosen to go before them, make the most considerable part of their history. So that had not *Moses stood in the gap*, he had even then destroyed them from the face of the earth.

7. How much more did they afterwards provoke God, by drunkenness, sloth and luxury? *They have erred through wine*, (saith the prophet *Isaiah*) *and through strong drink they are out of the way*; (chap. xxviii. 7.) which occasioned those vehement and repeated warnings, against that reigning sin; *Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim, them that are overcome with wine*, (ver. 1.) *The drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under foot*; (ver. 3.) *Woe unto them that rise up early that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them—But they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands*, (chap. v. 11, 12.) *Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink*; (ver. 22.) *Woe to them that are at ease in Zion,—that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the Lambs out of the flock, and their calves out of the midst of the stall, that chaunt to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instrument of musick,—that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph*,

(Amos

(Amos vi. ver. 1, 4, 5, 6.) *Behold this* (faith *Ezekiel* to *Jeruſalemn*) *was the iniquity of thy ſiſter Sodom; fulneſs of bread and abundance of idleneſs was in her and in her daughters*, (chap. xvi. 49.)

8. From *ſloth* and *fulneſs of bread*, *lewdneſs* naturally followed. It was even while *Moſes* was with them, that *the people began to commit whoredom with the daughthers of Moab:* yea, of the daughters of *Zion Iſaiah* complains, *They walk with ſtretched forth necks and wanton eyes*, (chap. iii. 16.) And of his people in general God complains by *Jeremiah*, *When I had fed them to the full, they aſſembled themſelves by troops in the harlot's houſes. They were as fed horſes in the morning, every one neighed after his neighbour's wife*, (chap. v. 7, 8.) *They be all adulterers, an aſſembly of treacherous men*, (chap. ix. 2.) *The land is full of adulterers*, (chap. xxiii. 10.)

Yea, and ſome of them were given up to *unnatural luſts*. Thus we read, *Judges* xix. 22. *The men of Gibeah, beſet the houſe*, wherein the ſtranger was, *and beat at the door, and ſpake to the maſter of the houſe, ſaying, Bring forth the man that came into thine houſe, that we may know him. And there were alſo* long after *ſodomites in the land*, in the days of *Rehoboam* and of the following kings: *The very ſhew of whoſe countenance witneſſed againſt them, and they declared their ſin as Sodom, they hid it not*, (Iſaiah iii. 9.)

9. This was accompanied with *injuſtice* in all its forms. Thus all the prophets teſtify againſt

them, *The Lord looked for* judgment, *but behold* oppreſſion; *for righteouſneſs, but behold a cry,* (Iſaiah v. 7.) *Thou haſt taken* uſury *and increaſe; thou haſt greedily gained of thy neighbour by* extortion—*Behold, I have ſmitten my hand, at thy* diſhoneſt gain *which thou haſt made,* (Ezek. xxii. 12, 13.) *The balances of deceit are in Jacob's hand; he loveth to* oppreſs, (Hoſea xii. 7.) *Are there not yet the* ſcant meaſure *that is abominable; the wicked* balances, *and the bag of* deceitful weights? (Mic. vi. 10, 11.) *He that departeth from evil, maketh himſelf a prey,* (Iſaiah lix. 15.) *And the Lord ſaw it, and it diſpleaſed him, that there was no judgment. The wicked devoureth the man, that is more righteous than he. They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag,* (Hab. i. 13, 14, 15.) *They covet fields and take them by* violence, *and houſes, and take them away,* (Mic. ii. 2.) *They pull off the robe with the garment, from them that paſs by ſecurely,* (ver. 8.) *They have dealt by oppreſſion with the ſtranger; they have vexed the fatherleſs and the widow,* (Ezek. xxii. 7.) *The people of the land have uſed* oppreſſion *and exerciſed* robbery; *and have vexed the poor and needy, yea, they have oppreſſed the ſtranger wrongfully,* (ver. 29.) *Their works are works of iniquity, and the act of* violence *is in their hands,* (Iſaiah lix. 6.) Judgment *is turned away backward, and* juſtice *ſtandeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the ſtreet, and equity cannot enter,* (ver. 14.)

10. *Truth*

10. *Truth* indeed was fallen, as well as juſtice. *Every mouth*, ſaith *Iſaiah*, *ſpeaketh folly*, (chap. ix. 17.) *This is a rebellious people*, lying *children*, (chap. xxx. 9.) *Their lips have ſpoken* lies *and muttered perverſeneſs. None calleth for juſtice, nor any pleadeth for* truth; *they truſt in vanity and ſpeak lies*, (chap lix. 3, 4.) This occaſioned that caution of *Jeremiah*, *Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and truſt ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly ſupplant, and every neighbour will walk with ſlanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not ſpeak the truth; they have taught their tongue to ſpeak lies, and weary themſelves to commit iniquity*, (chap. ix. 4, 5.)

11. And even thoſe who abſtained from theſe groſs outward ſins, were ſtill inwardly corrupt and abominable. *The whole head was ſick, and the whole heart was faint; yea, from the ſole of the foot even unto the head there was no ſoundneſs, but wounds and bruiſes, and putrifying ſores*, (Iſaiah i. 5, 6.) *All theſe nations* (ſaith God) *are uncircumciſed; and all the houſe of Iſrael are uncircumciſed in heart*, (Jer. ix. 26.) *Their heart is divided*, (Hoſ. x. 2.) *They have ſet up their idols in their heart; they are all eſtranged from me thro' their idols*, (Ezek. xiv. 3, 4.)

Their ſoul ſtill *clave unto the duſt*. They *laid up treaſures upon earth. From the leaſt of them*, ſaith *Jeremiah*, *even unto the greateſt, every one is given to* coveteouſneſs, (chap. vi. 13.) *They*

panted after the duſt of the earth, (Amos ii. 7.) *They laded themſelves with thick clay,* (Hab. iii. 6.) *They joined houſe to houſe,* and *laid field to field, until there was no place,* (Iſa. v. 8.) Yea, they *enlarged their deſires as hell:* They were *as death and could not be ſatisfied,* (Hab. ii. 5.)

12. And not only for their covetouſneſs, but for their *pride* of heart were they an abomination to the Lord. *The* pride *of Iſrael,* ſaith *Hoſea, doth teſtify to his face,* (c. vii. 10.) *Hear ye, give ear,* ſaith *Jeremiah, be not proud——Give glory to the Lord your God,* (c. xiii. 15.) But they would not be reproved; they were ſtill *wiſe in their own eyes,* and *prudent in their own ſight,* (Iſa. v. 21.) and continually ſaying to their neighbour, *Stand by thyſelf, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou!* (Iſa. lxv. 5.)

They added *hypocriſy* to their pride. *This people,* ſaith God himſelf, *draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their hearts far from me,* (Iſa. xxix. 13.) *They have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds,* (Hoſ. vii. 14.) *They return, but not to the Moſt High; they are like a deceitful bow,* (v. 16.) *They did but flatter him with their mouth, and diſſemble with him in their tongue,* (Pſal. lxxviii. 36.) So that herein they only *prophaned the holineſs of the Lord. And this have ye done again,* ſaith *Malachi, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with crying*

crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, (c. ii. 11, 13.)

13. This God continually declared to those formal worshippers. That their outward religion was but vain. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices,* saith the Lord? *I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs or of he-goats. Bring no more vain oblations: Incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting——When you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear,* (Isa. i. 11, 13, 15.) *He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck,* (c. lxvi. 3.) *When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer an oblation, I will not accept,* (Jer. xiv. 12.) *Go ye, serve your idols, if ye will not hearken unto me; but pollute ye my holy Name no more with your gifts,* (Ezek. xx. 39.)

14. Yet all this time were they utterly *careless* and *secure*; nay *confident* of being in the favour of God. They were *at ease*; they *put far away the evil day,* (Amos vi. 1, 3.) *Even when God had poured his anger upon* Israel, *it set him on fire round about, yet he knew it not; It burned him, yet he laid it not to heart,* (Isa. xliii. 25.) *A deceived heart had turned him aside, that he could not say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?* (c. xliv. 20.) So far from it, that at this very time they said, *We*

We are innocent, we have not ſinned, (Jer. ii. 35, 37.) *We are wiſe, and the law of the Lord is with us*, (c. viii. 8.) *The temple of the Lord! the temple of the Lord are we.* (c. vii. 4.)

15. Thus it was that they hardened themſelves in their wickedneſs. *They are impudent children*, ſaith God, *and ſtiff-hearted*, (Ezek. ii. 4.) *Were they aſhamed when they had committed abomination? Nay they were not at all aſhamed, neither could they bluſh*, (Jer. iv. 15.) *I have ſpread out my hand all the day to a rebellious people, that provoketh me to anger continually to my face*, (Iſa. lxv. 2, 3.) *They will not hearken unto me, ſaith the Lord, for all the houſe of* Iſrael *are impudent and hard-hearted*, (Ezek. iii. 7.) *Since the day that their fathers came forth out of the land of* Egypt *unto this day, I have ſent unto them all my ſervants the prophets, riſing up early and ſending them; yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck; they did worſe than their fathers*, (Jer. vi. 25, 26.)

They were equally hardened againſt mercies and judgments. When he *gave them rain, both the former and the latter in his ſeaſon*; when *he reſerved unto them the appointed weeks of the harveſt*, filling their hearts with food and gladneſs, ſtill none of this *revolting and rebellious people ſaid, Let us now fear the Lord our God*, (Jer. v. 23, 24.) Nor yet did *they turn unto him* when *he ſmote them*, (c. ix. 9, 13.) *In that day did the Lord call to weeping and to mourning: and behold*

joy

joy and gladneſs, eating fleſh and drinking wine; let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we ſhall die, (c. xxii. 11, 12.) Although *he conſumed them, yet they refuſed to receive inſtruction; they made their faces harder than a rock—None repented him, but every one turned to his courſe, as a horſe ruſheth into the battle,* (Jer. v. 3. c. viii. 6.) *I have given you want of bread in all your places, yet have ye not returned unto me, ſaith the Lord. I have alſo with-holden the rain from you when there were yet three months unto the harveſt—I have ſmitten you with blaſting and mildew: your gardens and your vineyards, the palmer worm devoured.—I have ſent among you the peſtilence after the manner of* Egypt; *your young men have I ſlain with the ſword—I have overthrown ſome of you, as God overthrew* Sodom *and* Gomorrah, *and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning; yet have ye not returned unto me, ſaith the Lord,* (Amos iv. 6—11.)

16. In conſequence of their reſolution not to return, they would not endure ſound doctrine, or thoſe that ſpake it. They *ſaid to the ſeers, ſee not, and to the prophets, propheſy not unto us right things—Speak unto us ſmooth things—Cauſe the Holy One of* Iſrael *to ceaſe from before us,* (Iſa. xxx. 10, 11.) But *they hated him that rebuked in the gate, and they abhorred him that ſpake uprightly,* (Amos v. 10.) Accordingly, *thy people,* (ſaith God to *Ezekiel*) *ſtill are talking againſt thee, by the walls, and in the doors of the houſes,*

(c. xxxiii.

(c. xxxiii. 30.) *And* Amaziah *the prieſt ſent to* Jereboam, *king of* Iſrael, *ſaying*, Amos *hath conſpired againſt thee in the midſt of the houſe of* Iſrael; *the land is not able to bear all his words. Alſo* Amaziah *ſaid unto* Amos, *Go flee thee away into the land of* Judah, *and propheſy there. But propheſy not again any more at* Bethel, *for it is the king's chappel, and it is the king's court.* (c. vii. 10, 12, 13.) From the ſame ſpirit it was that they ſaid of *Jeremiah, Come and let us deviſe devices againſt him—Come and let us ſmite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words*, (c. xviii. 18.) Hence it was that he was conſtrained to cry out, *O Lord, I am in deriſion daily; every one mocketh me. Since I ſpake, the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a deriſion daily: For I heard the defaming of many, Fear on every ſide: Report, ſay they, and we will report it: All my familiars watched for my halting; ſaying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we ſhall prevail againſt him, and we ſhall take our revenge on him*, (c. xx. 7, 8, 10.) And elſewhere, *Woe is me, my mother, that thou haſt borne me a man of ſtrife, and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent on uſury, nor men have lent to me on uſury; yet every one of them doth curſe me*, (c. xv. 19.)

17. But *if a man walking in the ſpirit of falſhood, do lie* (ſaith the prophet *Micah*) *ſaying, I will propheſy unto thee of wine and ſtrong drink, he ſhall even be the prophet of this people*, (c. ii. 11.)

And

And God gave them paſtors after their own hearts: ſuch were thoſe ſons of *Eli*, *ſons of Belial, who knew not the Lord*, (1 Sam. ii. 12.) rapacious, covetous, violent men, (ver. 14, 15, 16.) by reaſon of whom *men abhorred the offering of the Lord*, (ver. 17.) who not only *made themſelves vile*, (c. iii. 13.) but alſo *made the Lord's people to tranſgreſs*, (c. ii. 24.) while they *made themſelves fat with the chiefeſt of all the offerings of* Iſrael, (v. 29.) Such were thoſe of whom *Iſaiah* ſays, *The prieſt and the prophet have erred through ſtrong drink; they are ſwallowed up of wine*, (c. xxviii. 7.) *Come ye, ſay they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourſelves with ſtrong drink; and to-morrow ſhall be as this day, and much more abundant*, (c. lvi. 12.) Therefore (ſaith he) *the Lord hath poured out upon you the ſpirit of deep ſleep, and hath cloſed your eyes: the prophets and the ſeers hath he covered; and the viſion of all is become unto you, as the words of a book that is ſealed*, (c. xxix. 10, 11.) Such alſo were thoſe of whom he ſaith, *His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant; they are all dumb dogs; they cannot bark, ſleeping, laying down, loving to ſlumber.*

Greedy dogs, which can never have enough, and they are ſhepherds that cannot underſtand. They all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter, (c. lvi. 10, 11.)

Little better were thoſe of whom the prophets that followed have left us ſo dreadful an account; *Both prophet and prieſt are prophane; yea, in my houſe*

houſe have. I found their wickedneſs, ſaith the Lord. And from the prophets of Jeruſalem, *is prophaneneſs gone forth into all the land,* (Jer. xxiii. 11, 15.) *Her prieſts have violated my law, and have prophaned my holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the prophane, and I am prophaned among them,* (Ezek. xxii. 26.) *If I be a Father, where is mine honour; and if I be a maſter, where is my fear? Saith the Lord of hoſts unto you, O prieſts, that deſpiſe my name,* (Mal. i. 6.)

Yea ſome of them were fallen into the groſſeſt ſins. *The company of prieſts, ſaith* Hoſea, *commit lewdneſs: There is whoredom in* Ephraim, Iſrael *is deſpiſed,* (c. vi. 9, 10.) *I have ſeen alſo in the prophets of* Jeruſalem (ſaith God by *Jeremiah*) *an horrible thing; they commit adultery and walk in lies,* (c. xxiii. 14.)

18. And thoſe who were clear of this, were deeply covetous. *Who is there among you, that would ſhut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on my altar for nought. I have no pleaſure in you, ſaith the Lord of hoſts,* (Mal. vi. 10.) *The prieſts of* Zion *preach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money. Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and ſay, is not the Lord among us?* (Mic. iii. 11.) *Thus, ſaith the Lord, the prophets bite with their teeth, and cry peace: and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war againſt him,* (c. iii. 5.) Therefore *the word of the Lord came unto* Ezekiel, *ſaying, Propheſy*

phesy againſt the ſhepherds of Iſrael, *and ſay, Woe be to the ſhepherds of* Iſrael *that do feed themſelves: Should not the ſhepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat and ye cloath you with the wool; but ye feed not the flock. The diſeaſed have ye not ſtrengthened, neither have ye healed that which was ſick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye ſought that which was loſt, but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were ſcattered, becauſe there is no ſhepherd, and they became meat to all the beaſts of the field. Yea, my flock was ſcattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did ſearch or ſeek after them,* (c. xxxiv. 1—6.)

19. To the ſame effect do the other prophets declare, *Ye are departed out of the way, ye have cauſed many to ſtumble.——Therefore have I alſo made you contemptible and baſe before all the people,* (Mal. ii. 8, 9.) *From the prophet even unto the prieſt, every one dealeth falſely. They have healed alſo the hurt of the daughter of my people ſlightly, ſaying Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace,* (Jer. vi. 13, 14.) *They propheſy lies in my name,* (c. xiv. 14.) *They ſay ſtill unto them that deſpiſe me, the Lord had ſaid, ye ſhall have peace; and they ſay unto every man that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, no evil ſhall come upon you,* (c. xxiii. 17.) *The prophets of* Jeruſalem *ſtrengthen the hands of the evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedneſs,* (v. 14.) *They have*

have ſeduced my people, and one built up a wall, and lo others daubed it with untempered mortar, (Ezek. xiii. 10.) *With lies they have made the hearts of the righteous ſad, whom I have not made ſad; and ſtrengthened the hands of the wicked, that he ſhall not return from his wicked way, by promiſing him life,* (v. 22.) *Many paſtors have deſtroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot; they have made my pleaſant portion a deſolate wilderneſs,* (Jer. xii. 10.) *There is a conſpiracy of her prophets in the midſt of her, like a roaring lion, ravening the prey. They have devoured ſouls,* (Ezek. xxii. 25.) *Thus ſaith the Lord, Feed the flock of the ſlaughter whoſe poſſeſſors ſlay them, and hold themſelves not guilty, and they that ſell them ſay, Bleſſed be the Lord, for I am rich; and their own ſhepherds pity them not,* (Zach. xi. 4, 5.)

II. 1. Such is the general account which the ſcriptures give of the *Jews*, the antient church of God. And ſince all theſe things was *written for our inſtruction*, who are now the viſible church of the God of *Iſrael*, I ſhall in the next place appeal to all who profeſs this, to every one who calls himſelf a *Chriſtian*, how far in each inſtance the parallel holds? And how much *we* are better then *they?*

And firſt, were they *diſcontented*? Did they *repine* at the providence of God? Did they ſay, *Is the Lord among us or not?* When they were in

in imminent *danger*, or preſſing *want*, and ſaw no way to eſcape? And which of us can ſay, *I am clear from* this ſin: I have waſhed my hands and my heart in innocency? Have not we who *judge others*, *done the ſame things?* *Murmured* and *repined* times without number? Yea, and that when we were not in preſſing *want* nor diſtreſſed with imminent *danger?* Are we not in general, (our own writers being the judges) have we not ever been from the earlieſt ages, a *repining*, *murmuring*, *diſcontented people*, never long ſatisfied either with God or man? Surely in this we have great need to humble ourſelves before God; for we are in no wiſe better than they.

But *Jeſhuron forſook God which made him, and lightly eſteemed the rock of his ſalvation.* And did not *England* too? Aſk ye of the generations of old, enquire from the riſing of the ſun to the going down thereof, whether there was ever a people called by his name, which had leſs of *God in all their thoughts?* Who in the whole tenor of their behaviour ſhewed ſo *light* an *eſteem for the rock of their ſalvation?*

Could there ever be ſtronger cauſe for God to cry out, *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!* For hath he not *nouriſhed and brought* us *up* as his *children?* *And* yet, how *have* we *rebelled againſt* him! If *Iſrael* of old *did not know God*; if his antient people *did not conſider*; was this peculiar to them? Are not we alſo under the very ſame condem-

condemnation? Do we, as a people, *know* God? Do we *conſider* him as God? Do we tremble at the preſence of his power? Do we revere his excellent Majeſty? Do we remember at all times, God is here! He is now reading my heart: he ſpieth out all my ways: there is not a word in my tongue but he knoweth it altogether: is this the character of us *Engliſh Chriſtians?* The mark whereby we are known from the *Heathen?* Do we thus *know* God? Thus *conſider* his power, his love, his all-ſeeing eye? Rather, are we not likewiſe a *ſinful nation*, who *have forgotten him days without number!* A people *laden with iniquity*, continually *forſaking the Lord, and provoking the Holy One of Iſrael.*

2. There is indeed a wide difference, in this reſpect, between the *Jews* and us; they *happened* (if I may ſo ſpeak) to forget God, becauſe other things came in their way: but we *deſign* to forget him; we do it of ſet purpoſe, becauſe we do not like to remember him. From the accounts given by *Jeremiah*, we have reaſon to believe, that when that people were moſt deeply corrupted, yet the greateſt men in the nation, the miniſters of ſtate, the nobles and princes of *Judah*, talked of God ſometimes, perhaps, as frequently as upon any other ſubject. But is it ſo among us? Rather, is it not a point of good-breeding to put God far away, out of our ſight? Is he talked of at all among the great? The nobles or miniſters of ſtate in *England?* Among any perſons of rank

rank or figure in the world? Do they allow God any place in their converſation? From day to day, from year to year, do *you* diſcourſe one hour of the wonders he doth for the children of men? If one at a gentleman or a nobleman's table was to begin a diſcourſe, of the wiſdom, greatneſs, or power of God, would it not occaſion (at leaſt) as much aſtoniſhment, as if he had begun to talk blaſphemy? And if the *unbred* man perſiſted therein, would it not put all the company in confuſion? And what do you ſincerely believe the more favourable part would ſay of him when he was gone? But that---" He is a little touched in his head!" or, " Poor man! he has not ſeen the world."

You know, this is the naked truth. But how terrible is the thought to every ſerious mind! Into what a ſtate is this *Chriſtian* nation fallen! Nay the men of eminence, of fortune, of education! Would not a thinking foreigner, who ſhould be preſent at ſuch an interview, be apt to conclude, that the men of quality in *England* were atheiſts? That they did not believe there was any God at all; or, at beſt but an *Epicurean* God, who ſat at eaſe upon the circle of the heavens, and did not concern himſelf about us worms of the earth? Nay, but he underſtands every thought now riſing in your heart. And how long can you put him out of your ſight? Only till this veil of fleſh is rent in ſunder. For your *pomp* will not then *follow you.*

you. Will not your body be mingled with common duſt? And your ſoul ſtand naked before God? O that you would now *acquaint yourſelf with* God, that you may then be cloathed with glory and immortality!

3. Did God complain of the *Jews, Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them?* And how juſtly may he make the ſame complaint of us? For how exceeding ſmall a proportion do we find of thoſe in any place who call themſelves Chriſtians, that make a conſcience of attending them? Does one third of the inhabitants in any one pariſh throughout this great city, conſtantly attend *public prayer* and the *miniſtry of his word*, as of conſcience towards God? Does one tenth of thoſe who acknowledge it is an inſtitution of Chriſt, duly attend the *Lord's ſupper?* Does a fiftieth part of the *nominal* members of the church of *England* obſerve *the faſts* of the church, or ſo much as the forty days in *Lent*, and all *Fridays* in the year? Who of theſe then can caſt the firſt ſtone at the *Jews*, for neglecting the ordinances of God?

Nay, how many thouſands are found among us, who have never partook of the ſupper of the Lord? How many thouſands are there, that live and die in this unrepented diſobedience? What multitudes, even in this *Chriſtian* city, do not attend any *public* worſhip at all? No, nor ſpend a ſingle hour from one year to another in

privately

privately pouring out their hearts before God? Whether God *meeteth him that remembereth* him *in his ways* or not, is no concern of theirs: ſo the man eats and drinks, and *dies as a beaſt dieth*,

" Drops into the dark and diſappears."

It was not therefore of the children of *Iſrael* alone, that the meſſenger of God might ſay, *There is none* (comparatively) *that calleth upon thy name, that ſtirreth himſelf up to take hold of thee.*

4. Ye have heard, that it was ſaid to them of old time, *Becauſe of* ſwearing *the land mourneth.* But if this might be ſaid of the land of *Canaan*, how much more of *this* land? In what city or town, in what market or exchange, in what ſtreet or place of public reſort, is not the holy *name whereby we are called* taken in vain, day by day? From the noble to the peaſant, who fails to call upon God, in this if in no other way? Whether can you turn, where can you go, without hearing ſome praying to God for damnation, either on his neighbour or himſelf? Curſing thoſe, without either fear or remorſe, whom Chriſt hath bought to inherit a bleſſing!

Are *you* one of theſe ſtupid, ſenſeleſs, ſhameleſs wretches, that call ſo earneſtly for damnation on your own ſoul? What if God ſhould take you at your word? Are you *able to dwell*

with everlaſting burnings? If you are, yet why ſhould you be in haſte, to be in the *lake of fire burning with brimſtone?* God help you, or you will be there ſoon enough, and long enough; for that *fire is not quenched!* But the *ſmoke thereof aſcendeth up, day and night, for ever and ever.*

And what is that important affair, concerning which you was but now appealing to God? Was you *calling God to record upon your ſoul*, touching your everlaſting ſalvation? No; but touching the beauty of your horſe, the ſwiftneſs of your dog, or the goodneſs of your drink! How is this? What notion have you of God? What do you take him to be?

Idcirco ſtolidam præbet tibi vellere barbam
Jupiter ——— ?

What ſtupidity, what infatuation is this! Thus without either pleaſure, or profit, or praiſe, to ſet at nought him that hath *all power both in heaven and earth!* Wantonly to *provoke the eyes of his glory!*

Are you a man of letters, who are ſunk ſo low? I will not then ſend you to the inſpired writers (ſo called: perhaps you diſdain to receive inſtruction by them,) but the old, blind Heathen. Could you only fix in your mind the idea he had of God, (though it is not ſtrictly juſt, unleſs we refer

refer it to God made man) you would never thus affront him more,

Ἦ, καὶ κυανέῃσιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσι Κρονίων·
Ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερρώσαντο ἄνακτος
Κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο· μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὄλυμπον.

Shall not the very Heathen then, *riſe up in judgment againſt this generation, and condemn it?* Yea, and not only the learned Heathens of *Greece* and *Rome*, but the ſavages of *America*. For I never remember to have heard a wild *Indian* name the name of *Sootaleicatze*, (him that ſitteth in heaven) without either laying his hand upon his breaſt, or caſting his eyes down to the ground. And you are a *Chriſtian!* O how do you cauſe the very name of *Chriſtianity* to be blaſphemed among the Heathen!

5. But is it *light* ſwearing only, (inexcuſable as that is) becauſe of which our *land mourneth?* May it not alſo be ſaid of us, *Though they ſay the Lord liveth, ſurely they ſwear* falſely? Yea to ſuch a degree, that there is hardly the like, in any nation under heaven; that almoſt every corner of the land is filled with wilful deliberate *perjury*.

I ſpeak not now of the perjuries which every common ſwearer cannot but run into day by day. (And indeed common "ſwearing notoriouſly contributes to the growth of perjury. For oaths are little minded when common uſe has ſullied them,

and every minutes repetition has made them cheap and vulgar.") Nor of thofe which are continually committed and often detected in our open courts of juftice. Only with regard to the latter I muft remark, that they are a natural conſequence, of that monſtrous, ſhocking manner, wherein oaths are uſually adminiſtered therein: without any decency or ſerioufneſs at all; much leſs with that awful ſolemnity, which a rational Heathen would expect, in an immediate appeal to the great God of heaven.

I had once deſigned to conſider all the oaths which are cuſtomarily taken by any ſet of men among us. But I ſoon found this was a work too weighty for me: ſo almoſt *in infinitum* are oaths multiplied in *England:* I ſuppoſe to a degree which is not known in any other nation in *Europe.*

What I now propoſe is, to inſtance only in a few, (but thoſe not of ſmall importance) and to ſhew, how amazingly little regard is had, to what is ſolemnly promiſed or affirmed before God.

6. This is done, in part, to my hands by a late author. So far as he goes, I ſhall little more than tranſcribe his words. (Mr. *Diſney*'s Firſt Eſſay, p. 30.)

" When a *juſtice of peace* is ſworn into the commiſſion, he makes oath—" That he ſhall do equal right to the poor and to the rich, after his cunning, wit and power, and after the laws and cuſtoms

cuſtoms of the realm and ſtatutes thereof made, in all articles in the king's commiſſion to him directed.—What thoſe articles are, you will find in the firſt aſſignavimus of the commiſſion: "We have aſſigned you and every one of you, jointly and ſeverally—*to keep and cauſe to be kept, all ordinances and ſtatutes*; made for—the quiet, rule and government of our people, in all and every the articles thereof, according to the force, form and effect of the ſame, and to *chaſtiſe and puniſh all perſons, offending* againſt any of them, according to the form of thoſe ſtatutes and ordinances." So that he is ſolemnly ſworn to the execution of all ſuch ſtatutes, as the legiſlative power of the nation has thought fit to throw upon his care. Such are all thoſe (among others) made againſt *drunkenneſs*, *tipling*, prophane *ſwearing*, *blaſphemy*; *lewd* and *diſorderly* practices, and *prophanation of the* Lord's *day*." And it is hard to imagine how a juſtice of peace can think himſelf more concerned, to *ſuppreſs riots* or *private quarrels*, then he is to levy twelve pence on a *prophane ſwearer*, five ſhillings on a *drunkard*, ten ſhillings on the public houſe *that ſuffers tipling*, or any other penalty which the law exacts of vice and immorality. The ſame oath binds him both to one and the other, laying an equal obligation on his conſcience. How a magiſtrate, who neglects to puniſh exceſs, prophaneneſs and impiety, can excuſe himſelf from the guilt of *perjury*, I do not pretend to know. If he rea-

ſons fairly, he will find himſelf as much *for-ſworn*, as an evidence who being upon his oath, to declare *the whole truth*, nevertheleſs conceals *the moſt conſiderable part* of it. And his perjury is ſo much the more infamous, as the ill example and effects of it will be miſchievous."

7. The ſame author (in the preface to his ſecond eſſay) goes on:

" You, gentlemen of the *grand juries*, take a ſolemn oath, that you will *diligently enquire*, and true *preſentment* make, of *all* ſuch articles, matters and things *as ſhall be given you in charge:* as alſo, that you will (not only preſent no perſon for envy, hatred, or malice, but) not leave any *unpreſented*, for fear, favour or affection. Now, are not the laws againſt immorality and prophaneneſs *given you in charge*, as well as thoſe againſt riots, felony and treaſon? Are not preſentment and indictment *one* method expreſly appointed by the ſtatutes, for the puniſhment of *drunkenneſs* and *tipling?* Are not houſes of *bawdry* and *gaming*, puniſhable in the ſame courts, and conſequently *preſentable* by you? Is not the proclamation for the puniſhing of vice, prophaneneſs and immorality, always read before you as ſoon as you are ſworn? And does not the judge of aſſize, or chairman of the bench, in the charge given immediately after the reading it, either recite to you the particular laws againſt ſuch offences, or refer you for them to that proclamation? 'Tis plain from all this, that you are bound upon your

oaths,

oaths, to *present all vice* and *immorality*, as well as other crimes, that fall within your knowledge, becauſe they are expreſly *given you in charge*. And this you are to do, not only when *evidence* is offered before you by the *information of others*, but with regard to all ſuch offences as you or any of you are able of *your own perſonal knowledge* to preſent: all which you have ſworn to do impartially, without *fear*, *favour*, or affection."

I leave it now with all reaſonable men to conſider, how few *grand jurors* perform this? And conſequently, what multitudes of them, throughout the nation, fall under the guilt of *wilful perjury!*

8. The author proceeds, (p. 8.) " I ſhall next addreſs myſelf to you that are *conſtables*. And to you I muſt needs ſay, that if you know your duty, 'tis no thanks to us that are *juſtices*. For the oath we uſually give you is ſo *ſhort*, and in ſuch *general* terms, that it leaves with you no manner of inſtruction in the particulars of the office to which you are ſworn. But that which ought to be given you, recites part of your duty in the following words:

" You ſhall do your beſt endeavour, that rogues, vagabonds and night-walkers, be apprehended; and that the ſtatutes made for their puniſhment, be duly put in execution: you ſhall have *a watchful eye* to ſuch as ſhall keep any houſe or place where any *unlawful game* is uſed: as alſo to *ſuch* as ſhall *frequent* ſuch places, or ſhall *uſe* any

unlawful game there or elſewhere. You ſhall *preſent all* and *every* the offences contrary to the ſtatutes made to reſtrain the *tipling in inns, alehouſes*, and *other victualling* houſes, and for repreſſing of *drunkenneſs*. You ſhall once in the year, during your office, preſent all *Popiſh recuſants*. You ſhall well and duly execute all precepts and warrants to you directed. And you ſhall well and duly, according to your knowledge, power and ability, do and execute *all other* things belonging to the office of a *conſtable*, ſo long as you ſhall continue therein."

Upon this, " I would obſerve firſt, that *actors of plays* are expreſt by name within the ſtatute, to be taken up for vagabonds, and puniſhed accordingly: and that though a ſtatute of queen *Elizabeth's excepts* ſuch companies as have a licence under the hand and ſeal of a nobleman, yet a latter ſtatute in the reign of king *James* I. has taken away that protection from them; by declaring, that *from thenceforth no authority to be given by any peer of the realms, ſhall be available to free or diſcharge them from the pains and puniſhments of that former ſtatute*. Every *conſtable* therefore in thoſe pariſhes, where any of theſe *ſtrolling players* come, is bound by his *oath*, to ſeize upon, correct, and ſend them packing without delay."

" The next part of your oath obliges you to keep *a watchful eye*, on ſuch houſes as keep and ſuch *perſons* as uſe *unlawful gaming*. The ſtatute directs

directs you *weekly* or at leaſt *monthly*, to ſearch within your liberties, all houſes or places ſuſpected of this offence, and upon diſcovering, to bring them to puniſhment. Upon this article I would obſerve, 1. That the law makes ſome allowance, for artificers, huſbandmen, apprentices, labourers and ſervants, *to play in Chriſtmas*, but at no other time of the year; and 2. That *all ſports and paſtimes* whatſoever are made *unlawful* upon the Lord's day, by a ſtatute of king *Charles* II. You are therefore bound upon *oath*, to bring to puniſhment ſuch as are guilty of *prophaning* that day by any ſports or paſtimes whatſoever."

"The following parts of your oath are, 1. That you ſhall *preſent all* and *every* the offences of *tipling* and *drunkenneſs* that come to your knowledge; 2. That you ſhall once in the year *preſent* all *Popiſh recuſants*. Nay, and by the ſtatute on which your oath is grounded, you are obliged once a year to *preſent in ſeſſion*, all thoſe within your pariſhes, who (not being diſſenters) come not once in a month, at leaſt, to church." And 3. That you ſhall *well* and *duly* execute *all precepts* and *warrants* to you directed. I believe no *conſtable* will pretend to be ignorant of this. How is it then, that when we ſend out warrants, to levy on offenders for *ſwearing*, *drunkenneſs*, and the like, thoſe *warrants* are ſo ill obeyed? Are you not *ſworn* to execute *theſe* as well as any other, and that *duly* too, according to the tenor of your *precept*? Your *precept*

tells you, you shall *demand* such a sum, and if the offender will not pray, you shall *levy it by distress of his goods:* and *if no distress can be taken*, you are *then* only to set him *in the stocks*; otherwise you have no authority so to do: nor is the setting him in the stocks, when you might have distrained, any execution of your *precept.*"

"The last part of your oath is in *general* terms. That you shall *well* and *duly* according to your knowledge, power, and ability, do and execute *all other things* belonging to the office of a *constable.* I shall instance in some things which certainly *belong to your office*, because you, and none else, can do them. 1. A constable may, *without a warrant*, apprehend any persons, and carry them before a justice, who are driving carts, horses or cattle on the Lord's day: 2. Such as he shall find at *sports and pastimes* on that day. 3. Such as he shall find *tipling* in public-houses; 4. Shopkeepers *selling* or *exposing* goods on the Lord's day; and lastly, Such as he shall find drunk or blaspheming, or prophanely swearing or cursing."

"Thus I have shewn you, in part, *what belongs to your office:* it is well, if according to the tenor of your oath, you *duly, according to your knowledge and ability, do and execute all these things.* But remember, that if you do not, if you neglect any of them, you are *forsworn.*"

Now let all men judge, how many *constables* in *England* are clear of wilful *perjury!*

9. "I

9. "I will now (he goes on) addreſs myſelf to *church-wardens*. Your oath is, "That you ſhall well and truly execute the office of a *church-warden*, for the enſuing year; and to the beſt of your ſkill and knowledge, *preſent* ſuch perſons and things, as are *preſentable*, by the eccleſiaſtical laws of this realm." I ſhall ſet down only a few of theſe.

"The ſtatute of king *James* I. obliges you to preſent once a year, all monthly *abſenters* from church."

"The 90th canon enjoins you, firſt to *admoniſh* and then, if they reform not, to *preſent*, all your pariſhioners who do not *duly* reſort to *church* on Sundays, and there continue the whole time of divine ſervice. On this article obſerve. 1. That a perſon's being abſent from church, is ground ſufficient for you to proceed. 2. That you are not only to preſent thoſe who do not come to church, but alſo thoſe that behave *irreverently* or *indecently* there, either walking about, or talking; all who do not abide there orderly and ſoberly, the whole time of ſervice and ſermon, and all that *loiter* away any part of that time in the church-yard or in the fields."

"The 112th canon enjoins you, within 40 days after Eaſter, to exhibit to the biſhop or his chancellor, *the names of all* above the age of ſixteen, within your pariſh that did not receive the communion."

" Other ſtatutes oblige you to preſent *drunkenneſs*, *tippling*, and public houſes *ſuffering perſons to tipple* in them."

" And the 109th canon binds you to preſent *all manner* of vice, prophaneneſs and debauchery, requiring you faithfully to *preſent all* and every the offenders in *adultery*, *whoredom*, *drunkenneſs*, *prophane ſwearing*, or any other *uncleanneſs* and *wickedneſs* of life." It is therefore a part of that office to which you are ſolemnly ſworn to preſent not only all *drunkenneſs* and *tippling*, but *prophane ſwearing*, *lewdneſs*, and whatſoever elſe is contrary to Chriſtian piety. So that if you know any of your pariſhioners, be his quality or circumſtances what they will, that is guilty of any of theſe, you are obliged to *preſent him to the next viſitation*, or you are yourſelves guilty of perjury. And the 26th canon expreſſes ſuch an abhorrence of a *church-warden*'s neglect in this matter, that it forbids the miniſter, *in any wiſe*, to admit you to the holy communion, *who* (as the words of the canon are) *having taken your oaths to preſent all ſuch offences in your ſeveral pariſhes, ſhall notwithſtanding your ſaid oaths, either in neglecting or refuſing to preſent, wittingly and willingly, deſperately and irreligiouſly incur, the horrid guilt of perjury.*"

And who is clear? I appeal to every miniſter of a pariſh, from one end of *England* to the other, how many *church-wardens* have you known, in twenty, thirty, forty years, who did not thus

deſperately

desperately and *irreligiously incur, the horrid guilt of perjury?*

10. I proceed to perjuries of another kind. The oath taken by all *captains of ships*, every time they return from a trading voyage, runs in these terms:

"I do swear, that the entry above written, now tendered and subscribed by me, is a just report of the name of my ship, its burthen, bulk, property, number and country mariners, he present master and voyage: and that it doth farther contain a true account of my lading, with the particular marks, numbers, quantity, quality and consignment, of all the goods and merchandizes in my said ship, to the best of my knowledge; and that I have not broke bulk, or delivered any goods out of my said ship, since her loading in. So help me God."

These words are so clear, express, and unambiguous, that they require no explanation. But who takes this plain oath, without being *knowingly and deliberately forsworn?* Does one captain in fifty? Does one in five hundred? May we not go farther yet? Are there five captains of vessels now in *London*, who have not at one time or another, by this very oath, which they knew to be false when they took it, incurred the guilt of *wilful perjury?*

11. The oath which all *officers* of his Majesty's *customs*, take at their admission into the office, runs thus:

"I do

" I do fwear to be true and faithful in the execution, to the beft of my knowledge and power, of the truft committed to my charge and inſpection, in the ſervice of his Majeſty's cuſtoms : and that I will not take or receive, any reward or gratuity, directly or indirectly, other than my ſalary, or what is or ſhall be allowed me from the crown, or the regular fees eſtabliſhed by law, for any ſervice done or to be done in the execution of my employment in the cuſtoms, on any account whatſoever. So help me God."

On this it may be obſerved, 1. That there are regular fees, *eſtabliſhed by law*, for ſome of theſe officers; 2. That the reſt do hereby engage not to take or receive *any reward or gratuity*, *directly or indirectly*, other than their ſalary or allowance from the crown, *on any account whatſoever*.

How do the former keep this ſolemn engagement? They whoſe fees *are eſtabliſhed by law?* Do they take thoſe eſtabliſhed fees and no more? Do they not *receive any farther gratuity?* Not, *on any account whatſoever?* If they do, they are undeniably guilty of *wilful perjury*.

And do the latter take *no fees at all?* Do they receive *no reward or gratuity, for any ſervice done, or to be done, in the execution of their employment?* Do they not take any money, *directly or indirectly, on any account whatſoever?* Every time they do receive either more or leſs, they alſo are flatly *forſworn*.

Yet

Yet who ſcruples either the one or the other? Either the taking *a larger fee* than the law appoints? Or the taking *any fee*, large or ſmall, which is offered, even where the law appoints none at all?

What innumerable *perjuries* then are here committed, over and over, day by day! And without any remorſe; without any ſhame! without any fear either of God or man!

12. I will produce but one inſtance more. The oath of one who *votes* for a member of parliament is this:

"I do ſwear, I have not received or had, by myſelf, or of any perſon whatſoever in truſt for me, or for my uſe and benefit directly or indirectly, any ſum or ſums of money, office, place or employment, gift or reward, or any promiſe or ſecurity for any money, office, employment or gift, in order to give my vote at this election, and that I have not before been polled at this election. So help me God."

We may obſerve here, 1. That this oath is taken, once in ſeven years (if requeſted) by all the freeholders, in every county throughout *England* and *Wales*, as well as by all the freemen in every city and borough-town: and 2. That hereby every voter ſwears, in words liable to no evaſion, that he has not received, *directly or indirectly, any gift or reward*, or *promiſe* of any.

But (to paſs over thoſe godleſs and ſhameleſs wretches, who frequently vote twice at one election)

tion) how few are there, who can take this oath with a conſcience void of offence? Who have not received, *directly* or *indirectly*, *any gift* or promiſe of any? No! have not *you?* If you have received nothing elſe, have not you received meat or drink? And did you pay for the meat or drink you received? If not, that was *a gift*; and conſequently, you are as really *perjured*, as the man that has received an hundred pounds.

What melancholy proſpect is then before us! Here are almoſt *all the common people* of any ſubſtance throughout the land, both in the city and country, calling God to record to a *known*, *wilful falſhood!*

13. I ſhall conclude this head in the weighty words of the author before cited.

" Moſt of theſe, I am afraid, look upon their oaths as *things of courſe*, and little to be regarded. But can there be any thing in the world more ſacred than an *oath?* Is it not a ſolemn appeal to God for your ſincerity? And is not that very appeal an acknowledgment, that he will ſurely puniſh falſhood? Nay farther, Is it not *a calling down* the vengeance of God upon yourſelves if you are falſe? Do you not, by laying your hand upon the goſpel, declare, that *you hope for no ſalvation by Chriſt*, if you perform not what you then promiſe, or, if what you then affirm, is not true? And do not the words, *So help me God*, ſufficiently prove, that the intention of your oath

oath is so? And that if you swear false, you are to expect no mercy from God, either in this world, or the next? And do you not *personally* and expressly give your consent to this heavy curse, by *kissing the book?* How then dare any of you to venture to play with so awful an engagement? Is it that you think the oath of a *grand jury-man*, or *parish-officer*," (of a *captain*, an *officer of the customs*, or a *voter* in elections) "is not as sacred and binding as that of an *evidence at the bar?* What is it can make the difference? Both of them are equally appeals to God, and imprecations of his vengeance upon *wilful perjury*."

14. If there be then a God that is not mocked, what a weight of sin lies on this nation? And sin of no common dye; for perjury has always been accounted one of the deepest stain. And how will any one attempt to excuse this? By adding blasphemy thereto? So indeed some have done; saying, like those of old, *Tush, thou* God *carest not for it. The Lord seeth* (i. e. regardeth) *us not. The Lord hath forsaken the earth.* He has left *second causes* to take their course, and man *in the hand of his own counsel.*

* How many are they who now speak thus? According to whose *minute* philosophy, the *particular* providence of God is utterly exploded, *the hairs of our head are* no longer *numbered:* And *not* only *a sparrow*, but a city, an empire may *fall to the ground, without the will* or care *of our heavenly Father.* You allow then only a *general*

neral Providence. I do not underſtand the term. Be ſo kind as to let me know, what you mean by a "*general* providence, contradiſtinguiſhed from a *particular* one?" I doubt you are at a loſs for an anſwer; unleſs you mean ſome huge, unweildy thing, (I ſuppoſe, reſembling the *primum mobile* in the *ptolemaic* ſyſtem) which continually whirls the whole univerſe round, without affecting one thing more than another. I doubt this hypotheſis will demand more proof, than you are at preſent able to produce; beſide that it is attended with a thouſand difficulties, ſuch as you cannot readily ſolve. It may be therefore your wiſeſt way for once to think with the vulgar, to acquieſce in the plain, ſcriptural account. This informs us, that although God dwelleth in heaven, yet he ſtill *ruleth over all:* that his providence extends to every individual in the whole ſyſtem of beings which he hath made: that all *natural cauſes* of every kind, depend wholly upon his will; and he increaſes, leſſens, ſuſpends or deſtroys their efficacy, according to his own good pleaſure: that he uſes *preternatural cauſes* at his will, the miniſtry of good or of evil angels: and that he hath never yet precluded himſelf from exerting his own immediate power, from *ſpeaking* life or death into any of his creatures; from *looking* a world into being, or into nothing.

Thinkeſt thou then, *O man, that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgment of* this great God? O no longer *treaſure up unto thyſelf wrath, againſt the day*

day of wrath! Thou canſt not recall what is paſt; but now *keep thyſelf pure*, even were it at the price of all that thou haſt; and acknowledge the goodneſs of God, in that he did not long ſince cut thee off, and ſend thee to thy own place.

15. The *Jews* of old were charged by God, with *prophaning his ſabbaths* alſo. And do we *Chriſtians* come behind them herein? (I ſpeak of thoſe who acknowledge the obligation.) Do we *call the ſabbath a delight, holy of the Lord, honourable? Not doing our own ways, not finding our own pleaſure, nor ſpeaking our own words?* Do our *man-ſervant and maid-ſervant* reſt thereon? And the *ſtranger that is within our gates?* Is no buſineſs, but what is really neceſſary, done within our houſe? You know in your own conſcience, and God knoweth, that the very reverſe of this is true.

But ſetting aſide theſe things which are done as it were by ſtealth, whether by mean or honourable men; how many are they, in every city, as well as in this, who prophane the ſabbath with a high hand? How many in this, that openly defy both God and the king, that break the laws both divine and human, by working at their trade, delivering their goods, receiving their pay, or following their ordinary buſineſs, in one branch or other, and *wiping their mouths and ſaying*, "*I do no evil?*" How many buy and ſell on the day of the Lord, even in the open ſtreets of this city? How many open or (with ſome modeſty)

deſly) *half open* their ſhops? And when they have not the pretence of periſhable goods; without any pretence at all, money is their god, and gain their godlineſs.——But what are all theſe droves in the ſkirts of the town, that well nigh cover the face of the earth? Till they drop one after another into the numerous receptacles prepared for them in every corner. What are theſe to gain by prophaning the day of the Lord? Nothing at all. They *drink in iniquity like water.* Nay many of them *pay* for their ſin; perhaps great part of what ſhould ſuſtain their family the enſuing week. I know not what is *finding our own pleaſure, or doing our own ways*, if this is not. What then ſhall we plead in *your* excuſe? That " many others do it as well as you?" Nay, number is ſo far from extenuating your fault, that it aggravates it above meaſure. For this is open war againſt God. And a whole army of you joins together, and with one conſent, in the face of the ſun, *runs upon the thick boſſes of his buckler.*

16. It is once mentioned in the prophets, *In thee* (Jeruſalem) *they have ſet light by father and mother.* But frequent mention is made of their ſetting light by their civil parents, of their murmurings and rebellions againſt their governors. Yet ſurely *our* boaſting againſt them is excluded, even in this reſpect. For do not all our hiſtories witneſs ſuch a ſeries of mutinies, ſeditions, factions and rebellions, as are ſcarce to be paralleled in

in any other kingdom, since the world began? And has not the wild, turbulent, ungovernable spirit of our countrymen, been continually acknowledged and lamented, (as abundance of their writings testify to this day) by the cool, rational part of the nation? Terrible effects whereof have been seen and felt, more or less, in every generation.

But did this spirit exist only in times past? Blessed be God, it is now restrained, it does not break out; but the traces thereof are still easy to be found. For whence springs this continual *speaking evil of dignities?* Of all who are at the helm of public affairs? Whence this *speaking evil of the ruler of our people*, so common among all orders of men. I do not include those whose province it is to inspect all the public administrations. But is not almost every private gentleman in the land, every clergyman, every tradesman; yea every man and woman that has a tongue, a politician, a settler of the state? Is not every carman and porter abundantly more knowing than the king, lords and commons together? Able to tell you all their foibles, to point out their faults and mistakes, and how they ought to proceed, if they will save the nation? Now all this has a natural, undeniable tendency to mutiny and rebellion. O what need have we above any nation upon earth, of his continual care and protection, who alone is able to *rule the raging of the sea*, and *still the madness of the people!*

17. But

17. But to proceed. Were there *drunkards* in *Ephraim, mighty to drink wine, men of ſtrength to mingle ſtrong drink?* And are there not in *England?* Are they not the growth of every county, city and town therein? Thoſe do not indeed, or not often *riſe up early, that they may follow ſtreng drink*; and ſo *continue till night, till wine inflame them.* They have found a readier way! namely, to begin at night, and continue following their wine or ſtrong drink till the morning. And what numbers are there of theſe throughout the land? Loſt to reaſon and humanity, as well as to religion: ſo that no wonder *they regard not the works of the Lord, neither conſider the operation of his hands.*

*Nor indeed have *our* drunkards need to continue from morning *to night*, *until* wine *inflame them:* ſeeing *they* have found a far more compendious method of caſting aſide all ſenſe and reaſon, and diſincumbering themſelves of all remains, either of conſcience or underſtanding. So that whatever work of darkneſs is ſpeedily to be done, and that without any danger of being interrupted, either by fear, compaſſion or remorſe, they may be in a few moments, by one draught as effectually qualified for it, as if they could ſwallow a legion of devils. Or, (if that be all their concern) they may, at a moderate expence, deſtroy their own body as well as ſoul, and plunge through this *liquid fire,*

fire, into that *prepared for the devil and his angels.*

* Friend! Stop! You have the form of a man ſtill. And perhaps ſome remains of underſtanding. O may the merciful God lay hold of that! Unto him all things are poſſible. Think a little for once. What is it you are doing? Why ſhould you deſtroy yourſelf? I could not uſe the *worſt enemy* I have in the world, as you uſe *yourſelf.* Why ſhould you murder yourſelf inch by inch? Why ſhould you burn yourſelf alive? O ſpare your own body at leaſt, if you have no pity for your ſoul! But have you a ſoul then? Do you really believe it? What, a ſoul that muſt live for ever! O ſpare thy ſoul! Do not deſtroy *thy own* ſoul with an everſting deſtruction! It was made for God. Do not give it into the hands of that old murderer of men! Thou canſt not ſtupify it long. When it leaves the body it will awake and ſleep no more. Yet a little while, and it launches out into the great deep, to live, and think, and feel for ever. And what will chear thy ſpirit there, if thou haſt not *a drop of water to cool thy tongue?* But the die is not yet caſt. Now cry to God, and *iniquity ſhall not be thy ruin.*

18. Of old time there were alſo thoſe that *were at eaſe in Zion, that lay upon beds of ivory, and ſtretched themſelves upon their couches, that eat the lambs out of the flock, and calves out of the ſtall.*

ſtall. But how inelegant were theſe ancient *epicures! Lambs out of the flock, and calves out of the ſtall!* Were theſe the beſt dainties they could procure? How have we improved, ſince *Jeroboam*'s time? Who can number the varieties of our tables; or the arts we have "To enlarge the pleaſure of taſting?" And what are their couches, or beds of ivory, to the furniture of our apartments? Or their *chains and bracelets, and mantles and changeable ſuits of apparel*, to the ornaments of our perſons? What compariſon is there between their diverſions and ours? Look at *Solomon* in all his glory; and yet may we not queſtion, whether he was not an utter ſtranger to *the pleaſures of the chaſe?* And notwithſtanding his 40,000 horſes, did he ever ſee a *race* in his life? He *made gardens and orchards, and pools of water; he planted vineyards and built houſes.* But had he one *theatre* among them all? No. * This is the glory of later times. Or had he any conception of a *ball*, an *aſſembly*, a *maſquerade*, or a *ridotto?* And who imagines that all his inſtruments of muſick put together, were any more to be compared to ours, than his or his father's rumbling *Hebrew* verſes,

"To the ſoft ſing ſong of *Italian* lays."

In all theſe points our pre-eminence over the *Jews*, is much every way.

* Yea,

* Yea, and over our own anceſtors, as well as theirs. But is this our glory, or our ſhame? Were *Edward* the third, or *Henry* the fifth to come among us now, what would they think of the change in their people? Would they applaud the elegant variety at the *old Baron*'s table? Or the coſtly delicacy of his furniture and apparel? Would they liſten to theſe inſtruments of muſick? Or find pleaſure in thoſe diverſions? Would they rejoice to ſee the nobles and gentry of the land, lying *at eaſe, ſtretching themſelves on beds* of down? Too delicate to uſe their own limbs, even in the ſtreets of the city; to bear the touch of the people, the blowing of the wind, or the ſhining of the ſun! O how would their hearts burn within them! What indignation, ſorrow, ſhame muſt they feel, to ſee the ancient hardineſs loſt, the *Britiſh* temperance, patience and ſcorn of ſuperfluities, the rough, indefatigable induſtry, exchanged for ſoftneſs, *idleneſs and fulneſs of bread!* Well for them, that they were gathered unto their fathers, before this exchange was made!

19. To prove at large, that the luxury and ſenſuality, the ſloth and indolence, the ſoftneſs and idleneſs, the effeminacy and falſe delicacy of our nation are without a parallel, would be but loſt labour. I fear, we may ſay, the *lewdneſs* too; for if the *Jews*, as the prophet ſpeaks, *aſſembled themſelves by troops in the harlots houſes*, ſo do the *Engliſh*, and much more abundantly.

Indeed, where is *male chaſtity* to be found? Among the nobility? Among the gentry? Among the tradeſmen? Or among the common people of *England?* How few lay any claim to it at all? How few deſire ſo much as the reputation of it? Would you yourſelf account it an honour or a reproach, to be ranked among thoſe of whom it is ſaid, *Theſe are they which are not defiled with women: for they are virgins?* And how numerous are they now, even among ſuch as are accounted men of honour and probity, *who are fed as horſes, every one neighing after his neighbour's wife?*

But as if this were not enough, is not the ſin of *Sodom* too, more common among us than ever it was in *Jeruſalem?* Are not our ſtreets beſet with thoſe monſters of uncleanneſs, who *burn in their luſt one toward another*, whom God hath *given up to a reprobate mind, to do thoſe things which are not convenient?* O Lord, thy compaſſions fail not: therefore we are not conſumed.

20. Neither do we yield to them in *injuſtice* any more than *uncleanneſs*. How frequent are open robberies among us? Is not *the act of violence* even *in our ſtreets?* And what laws are ſufficient to prevent it? Does not *theft* of various kinds abound in all parts of the land, even tho' death be the puniſhment of it? And are there not among us, who *take uſury and increaſe*, who *greedily gain of their neighbour by* extortion? Yea, whole trades which ſubſiſt by ſuch extortion, as was not named either among the *Jews* or

or *Heathens? Is there not* yet *the ſcant meaſure, the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights?* Beſide the thouſand nameleſs ways of over-reaching and defrauding, the *craft* and *myſtery* of every trade and profeſſion. It were an endleſs taſk to deſcend to particulars, to point out in every circumſtance, how not only *ſharpers* and *gameſters*, (thoſe public nuſances, thoſe ſcandals to the *Engliſh* nation) but high and low, rich and poor, men of character and men of none, in every ſtation of public or private life, *have corrupted themſelves*, and generally applaud themſelves and count it *policy* and wiſdom ſo to do: ſo that if *gain* be at hand, they care not, though *juſtice ſtand afar off:* ſo that *he which departeth from evil*, which cometh not into their ſecret, ſtill *maketh himſelf a prey*; and *the wicked* ſtill *devoureth the man that is more righteous than he.*

And what redreſs? Suppoſe a great man to oppreſs the needy? Suppoſe the rich grinds the face of the poor: what remedy againſt ſuch *oppreſſion* can he find in this *Chriſtian* country? If the one is rich and the other poor, doth not juſtice ſtand afar off? And is not the poor under the utmoſt improbability, (if not impoſſibility) of obtaining it? Perhaps the hazard is greater among us, than either among *Jews*, *Turks*, or *Heathens.*

For example. Suppoſe a great man, with or without form of law, does wrong to his poor neighbour. What will he do? Sue his lord-

ſhip at common law? Have the cauſe tried at the next ſeſſions or aſſizes? Alas! Your own neighbours, thoſe who know the whole caſe, will tell you, "You are out of your ſenſes." "But twelve good men and true will do me juſtice." Very well: but where will you find them: men unbiaſſed, incapable of corruption, ſuperior both to fear and favour, to every view whether of gain or loſs? But this is not all; they muſt not only be good and true, but wiſe and underſtanding men. Elſe how eaſy is it for a ſkilful pleader to throw a miſt before their eyes? Even ſuppoſing too the judge to be quite impartial, and proof againſt all corruption. And ſhould all theſe circumſtances concur, (of which I fear there are not many precedents) ſuppoſing a verdict is given in your favour, ſtill you have gained nothing. The ſuit is removed into a higher court, and you have all your work to begin again. Here you have to ſtruggle with all the ſame difficulties as before, and perhaps, many new ones too. However, if you have money enough, you may ſucceed: but if that fails, your cauſe is gone. Without money, you can have no more *law*; *poverty* alone utterly ſhuts out *juſtice*.

But, "cannot an honeſt *attorney* procure me juſtice?" An *honeſt* attorney! Where will you find one? Of thoſe who are called *exceeding honeſt* attornies, who is there that makes any ſcruple.

1. To

1. To promote and encourage *needleſs* ſuits, if not *unjuſt* ones too ?

2. To *defend a bad cauſe*, knowing it ſo to be :

By making a *demur*, and then withdrawing it :

By pleading ſome *falſe plea*, to the plaintiff's declaration :

By putting in an *evaſive anſwer* to his bill :

By *protracting* the ſuit, if poſſible, till the plaintiff is ruined :

3. To *carry a cauſe* not amounting to ten ſhillings into *Weſtminſter-hall*, by laying it in his declaration as above forty :

4. To *delay* his own client's ſuit knowingly and wilfully, in order to gain more thereby :

5. To *draw himſelf* the pleadings or conveyances of his client, inſtead of giving them to be drawn by able council :

6. To *charge* his client with the fees which ſhould have been given to ſuch council, although they were not given :

7. To *charge* for drawing fair copies, where none were drawn :

8. To charge *fees for expedition* given to clerks, when not one farthing has been given them ;

9. To ſend his clerk a journey (longer or ſhorter) to do buſineſs with or for different perſons ; and to charge the horſe-hire and expence of that journey to every perſon ſeverally :

10. To ſend his clerk to *Weſtminſter*, on the buſineſs of ten (it may be) or twenty perſons, and to charge each of theſe twenty for his attendance, as if he had been ſent on account of *one* only:

11. To charge *his own attendance* in like manner: and

12. To fill up his bill with *attendances*, *fees*, and *term-fees*, though his client is no whit forward in his cauſe.

This is he that is called an *honeſt attorney!* How much honeſter is a pick-pocket?

But there is a magiſtrate whoſe peculiar office it is, to redreſs the injured and oppreſſed. Go then and make trial of this remedy; Go, and tell your caſe to the *Lord Chancellor*. Hold; you muſt go on regularly: you muſt tell him your caſe, *in form of law*, or not all. You muſt therefore *file a bill* in chancery, and *retain* a lawyer belonging to that court. "But ye have already ſpent all you have; you have *no money*." Then I fear you will have *no juſtice*. You ſtumble at the threſhold. If you have either loſt or ſpent all, your cauſe is naught: it will not even come to a hearing. So, if the oppreſſor has ſecured all that you had, he is as ſafe as if you was under the earth.

* 21. Now what an amazing thing is this! The very *greatneſs* of the villainy makes it beyond *redreſs!*——But ſuppoſe he that is oppreſt, has ſome ſubſtance left, and can go through all the

the courts of juſtice, what parallel can we find among *Jews*, *Turks*, or *Heathens*, for either the delays or the expence attending it? With regard to the former, how monſtrous is it, that in a ſuit relating to that inheritance, which is to furniſh you and your family with food and raiment, you muſt wait month after month, perhaps year after year, before it is determined, whether it be yours or not? And what are you to *eat*, or to *wear* in the mean time? Of that the court takes no cognizance! Is not this very *delay*, (ſuppoſe there were no other grievance attending the *Engliſh* courſe of law) wrong beyond all expreſſion? Contrary to all ſenſe, reaſon, juſtice and equity? A *capital* cauſe is tried in one day, and finally decided at once. And, *is the life* leſs than *meat? Or the body* of leſs concern *than raiment?* What a ſhameleſs mockery of juſtice then, is this putting off *pecuniary* cauſes from term to term, yea, from year to year.

* With regard to the latter. A man has wronged me of a hundred pounds. I appeal to a judge for the recovery of it. How aſtoniſhing is it, that this judge himſelf cannot give me what is my right, and what evidently appears ſo to be, unleſs I firſt give, perhaps one half of the ſum, to men I never ſaw before in my life!

22. I have hitherto ſuppoſed, that all cauſes when they are decided, are decided according to juſtice and equity. But is it ſo? Ye learned in the law, is no *unjuſt ſentence* given in your courts? Have

not the ſame cauſes been decided quite oppoſite ways? One way, this term, juſt the contrary, the next? Perhaps one way in the morning (this I remember an inſtance of) and another way in the afternoon. How is this? Is there no *juſtice* left on earth? No regard for right or wrong? Or have cauſes been puzzled ſo long, that you know not now, what is either wrong or right? What is agreeable to law, or contrary to it? I have heard ſome of you frankly declare, that it is in many caſes next impoſſible to know, what is law, and what is not. So are your *folio*'s of law multiplied upon you, that no human brain is able to contain them: no; nor any conſiſtent ſcheme, or abſtract of them all.

But is it really owing to *ignorance* of the law, (this is the moſt *favourable* ſuppoſition) that ſo few of you ſcruple *taking fees* on either ſide, of almoſt any cauſe that can be conceived? And that you generally plead in the manner you do on any ſide of any cauſe? Rambling to and fro, in a way ſo abhorrent from common ſenſe, and ſo utterly foreign to the queſtion? I have been amazed at hearing the pleadings of ſome eminent council: and when it has fallen out that the pleader on the other ſide underſtood only the common rules of logic, he has made thoſe eminent men appear, either ſuch egregious knaves, if they could help it, or ſuch egregious blockheads, if they could not, that one would have believed they would ſhew their face there no more.

more.——Mean time, if there be a God that judgeth righteouſly, what horrid inſults upon him are theſe! *Shall I not viſit for theſe things, ſaith the Lord? Shall not my ſoul be avenged of ſuch a nation as this!*

23. There is one inſtance more of (I know not what to term it) injuſtice, oppreſſion, ſacrilege, which hath long cried aloud in the ears of God. For among men, who doth hear? I mean the management of many of thoſe who are intruſted with our public charities. By the pious munificence of our fore-fathers, we have abundance of theſe, of various kinds. But is it not glaringly true, (to touch only on a few generals) that the managers of many of them, either 1. Do not apply the benefaction to *that uſe* for which it was deſigned by the benefactor, or 2. Do not apply it with ſuch *care and frugality*, as in ſuch a caſe are indiſpenſably required: or 3. Do not apply the whole of the benefaction to any *charitable uſe* at all; but *ſecret* part thereof, from time to time, for the uſe of themſelves and their families. Or, laſtly, by plain, bare-faced oppreſſion, *exclude* thoſe from having any part in ſuch benefaction, who dare (though with all poſſible tenderneſs and reſpect) ſet before them the things that they have done:

" Yet *Brutus* is an honourable man:
" So are they all: all honourable men!"

And some of them, had in esteem for religion; accounted patterns both of honesty and piety! But God *seeth not as man seeth.* He *shall repay them to their face.* Perhaps, even in the present world. For that scripture is often still fulfilled, *This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief,* (such he is and no better, in the eyes of God, no whit honester than a highwayman) *and it shall remain in the midst of the house, and shalt consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof,*

24. And is not *truth,* as well as *justice, fallen in our streets?* For who *speaketh the truth from his heart?* Who is there, that makes a conscience of speaking the thing as it is, whenever he speaks at all? Who scruples the telling of *officious lies?* The varying from truth, in order to do good? How strange does that saying of the ancient fathers, found in modern ears, "I would not tell a lie, no, not to save the souls of the whole world." Yet is this strictly agreeable to the word of God; to that of St. *Paul* in particular, if any say, *let us do evil that good may come,* their *damnation is just.*

But how many of us do this evil, without ever considering, whether good will come or no? Speaking what we do not mean, merely out of *custom,* because it is *fashionable* so to do? What an immense quantity of falsehood does this ungodly

ungodly *faſhion* occaſion day by day? For hath it not over run every part of the nation? How is all our language ſwoln with *compliment?* So that a well-bred perſon is not *expected* to ſpeak as he thinks: we do not *look for it* at his hands. Nay, who would thank him for it? How few would ſuffer it? It was ſaid of old, even by a warrior and a king, *He that telleth lies ſhall not tarry in my ſight:* But are we not of another mind? Do not we rather ſay, *He that telleth not lies, ſhall not tarry in my ſight?* Indeed the trial ſeldom comes; for both ſpeakers and hearers are agreed, that form and ceremony, flattery and compliment ſhould take place, and *truth* be baniſhed from all that *know the world.*

And if the rich and great have ſo ſmall regard to *truth*, as to *lie* even for *lying-ſake*, what wonder can it be that men of lower rank will do the ſame thing *for gain?* What wonder that it ſhould obtain, as by common conſent in all kinds of *buying and ſelling?* Is it not an adjudged caſe, that it is no harm to tell lies *in the way of trade?* To ſay, that is the *loweſt price* which is not the loweſt; or that you *will not take* what you *do take* immediately? Inſomuch that it is a proverb even among the *Turks*, when aſked to abate of their price, "What! do you take me to be a Chriſtian?" So that never was that caution more ſeaſonable than it is at this day, *Take ye heed every one of his neigbour, and truſt ye not in any bro-*

ther: for every brother will utterly supplant, and they will deceive every one his neighbour.

25. And as for those few who abstain from outward sins, is their heart right with God? May he not say of us also (as of the *Jews*) *This people is uncircumcised in heart?* Are not *you?* Do you then *love the* Lord *your* God, *with all your heart, and with all your strength?* Is he *your* God and your all? The desire of your eyes? The joy of your very heart? Rather, do you not *set up your idols in your heart?* Is not your *belly your God?* Or your diversion? Or your fair reputation? Or your friend? Or wife? Or child? That is plainly, do not you delight in some of these earthly goods, more than in the God of heaven? Nay, perhaps you are one of those grovelling souls that *pant after the dust of the earth!* Indeed who does not? Who does not get as much as he can? Who of those who are not *accounted* covetous, yet does not gather all the money he can *fairly*, and perhaps much more? For are they those only whom *the world rank* among misers, that use every art to increase their fortune? Toiling early and late, spending all their strength in *loading themselves with thick clay? How long?* Until the very hour when God calleth them; when he saith unto each of them, *Thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee! And whose shall those things be which thou hast prepared?*

26. And yet doth not our *pride*, even the pride

pride of thoſe whoſe ſoul *cleaves to the duſt, teſtify againſt us?* Are *they* not *wiſe in their own eyes, and prudent in their own conceit?* Have not writers of our own remarked, that there is not upon earth a more *ſelf-conceited* nation than the *Engliſh*; more opiniated both of their own *national* and *perſonal* wiſdom, and courage, and ſtrength? And indeed, if we may judge by the inhabitants of *London*, this is evident to a demonſtration: for, are not the very meaneſt of them able to inſtruct both the king and all his counſellors? What cobler in *London* is not wiſer than the principal Secretary of State? What coffee-houſe diſputer is not an abler divine than his Grace of *Canterbury?* And how deep a contempt of others is joined with this high opinion of ourſelves? I know not whether the people of all nations are greater maſters of diſſimulation; but there does not *appear* in any nation whatever, ſuch a proneneſs to deſpiſe their neighbour: to deſpiſe not foreigners only (near two thouſand years ago they remarked *Britannos hoſpitibus feros)* but their own countrymen; and that very often for ſuch ſurpriſing reaſons, as nothing but undeniable fact could make credible. How often does the gentleman in his coach deſpiſe thoſe *dirty fellows that go a foot?* And theſe, on the other hand, deſpiſe full as much thoſe *lazy fellows that loll in their coaches?* No wonder then that thoſe who have the *form of godlineſs* ſhould deſpiſe them that have not: that the ſaint of the world

ſo-

so frequently says to the gos sinner, in effect, if not in terms, *Stand by thyself; come not near unto me; for I am holier than thou!*

27. Yet what kind of holiness is this? May not God justly declare of us also, *This people draw near me with their mouth, but they have removed their hearts far from me. They do but flatter me with their mouth, and dissemble with me in their tongue.* Is it not so with *you?* When you speak to God, do your lips and your heart go together? Do you not often utter words by which you mean just nothing? Do not you say and unsay? Or, say one thing to God, and another to man? For instance, you say to God, *Vouchsafe O Lord, to keep me this day without sin.* But you say to man, this cannot be done; it is all folly and madness to expect it. You ask of God, that you *may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name:* but you tell man, there is no *perfect love* upon earth; it is only a madman's dream. You pray God, to *cleanse the thoughts of your heart, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit.* But you assure your neighbour, there is no such thing as *inspiration* now, and that none pretend to it but *enthusiasts.* What gross *hypocrisy* is this! Surely you think, there is no *knowledge in the Most High. O be not deceived,* God *is not mocked. But whatsoever ye sow, that also shall ye reap!*

28. Such at present is the religion of this *Christian* nation! So do we honour him by whose

whose name we are called. And yet was there ever a nation more careless and secure? More unapprehensive of the wrath of God! How can a man more effectually expose himself to the ridicule of those who are esteemed men of understanding, than by shewing any concern, *as if* the judgments of God were hanging over our heads? Surely then *a deceived heart hath turned* us *aside, that* we *cannot say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?* Surely this our confidence is not of God: it is rather a judicial infatuation; a stupid insensibility; a deep sleep, the fore-runner of heavy vengeance.

"Ruin behind it stalks, and empty desolation."

Surely never was any people more fitted for destruction! *Impudent children are they, and stiff hearted. Are they ashamed when they have committed abomination?* When they have openly prophaned the day of the Lord? When they have committed lewdness? Or when they have uttered such curses and blasphemies, as are not heard of among the Heathens? Nay, *They are not at all ashamed, neither can they blush.* And though God send unto them all his servants, rising up early and sending them, yet *will they not hear; they hearden their neck: they do worse than their fathers.*

What *then* can God *do more for his vineyard which he hath not done?* He hath long tried us with

with mercies, *giving rain and fruitful ſeaſons, filling us with the flour of wheat.* But ſtill *this revolting and rebellious people ſay not, Let us now fear the* Lord *our* God. Nay, they gave him no thanks for all his mercies; they did not even acknowledge them to be his gift. They did not ſee the hand of God in any of theſe things; they could *account for them* another way. O ye unwiſe, when will ye underſtand? Know ye not yet, there is a God that ruleth the world? What did ye ſee with your eyes? Was the *race to the ſwift*, or *the battle to the ſtrong?* Have ye forgotten *Dettingen* already? Does not *England* know that God was there?—Or ſuppoſe your continuance in peace, or ſucceſs in war, be the mere reſult of your own wiſdom and ſtrength; do ye command the ſun and the clouds alſo? Can ye pour out or *ſtay the bottles of heaven?* But let it all be nature, chance, any thing—ſo God may have no hand in governing the earth!

* 29. Will his judgments bring us to a better mind? Do we *hear the rod, and him that has appointed it?* Let us obſerve: What fruit do we find in thoſe who are *even conſumed by means of his heavy hand?* Let any one that deſires to be clearly ſatisfied herein, viſit the *hoſpitals* of this city. Let him judge for himſelf, how the patients there receive God's fatherly viſitation; eſpecially *there*, becauſe mercy alſo is mixed with judgment; ſo that it is evident *the Lord loveth whom he chaſteneth.* Go then into any

ward,

ward, either of men or women, look narrowly from one end to the other: are they humbling themſelves under the hand of God? Are they trembling under a ſenſe of his anger? Are they praiſing him for his love? Are they exhorting one another, not to faint when they are rebuked of him? How do nine in ten of them ſpend the time, that important time from morning to evening? Why in ſuch a manner, that you would not eaſily learn, from thence, whether they were Chriſtians, Pagans or Mahometans.

* Is there any deeper diſtreſs than this to be found? Is there a greater affliction than the loſs of health? Perhaps there is, the loſs of liberty, eſpecially as it is ſometimes circumſtanced. You may eaſily be convinced of this, by going into either *Ludgate* or *Newgate*. What a ſcene appears, as ſoon as you enter! The very place ſtrikes horror into your ſoul. How dark and dreary! How unhealthy and unclean! How void of all that might miniſter comfort! But this is little, compared to the circumſtances that attend the being confined in this ſhadow of death. See that poor wretch, who was formerly in want of nothing, and encompaſſed with friends and acquaintance, now cut off, perhaps by an unexpected ſtroke, from all the chearful ways of men; ruined, forſaken of all, and delivered into the hands of ſuch maſters, and ſuch companions! I know not, if to one of a thinking, ſenſible turn

of

of mind, there could be any thing like it on this ſide hell.

What effect then has this heavy viſitation of God, on thoſe who lie under it for any time? There is perhaps, an exception here and there; but in general, they are abandoned to all wickedneſs, utterly diveſted of all fear of God, and all reverence to man; inſomuch, that they commonly go out of that ſchool compleatly fitted for any kind or degree of villany, perfectly brutal and deviliſh, thoroughly furniſhed for every evil word and work.

30. Are our countrymen more effectually reclaimed, when danger and diſtreſs are joined? If ſo, the *army*, eſpecially in time of war, muſt be the moſt religious part of the nation. But is it ſo indeed? Do the *ſoldiery* walk as thoſe who ſee themſelves on the brink of eternity? *Redeeming* every *opportunity* of glorifying God, and doing good to men, becauſe they know not the hour in which their Lord will require their ſouls of them? So far from it, that a *ſoldier's religion* is a by-word, even with thoſe who have no religion at all; that vice and prophaneneſs in every ſhape reign among them without controul; and that the whole tenor of their behaviour ſpeaks, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*

Have thoſe who are expoſed to ſtill more danger, the *Engliſh ſea-forces*, more religion than thoſe at land? It is ſaid they were once remarkable

able for this: and it is certain Sir *Francis Drake* feared God, as did moſt of his commanders; and we have reaſon to believe, his marines and ſailors too. But what ſhall we ſay of the *navy* that now is, more particularly of the ſhips of war? Is religion there? Either the power or the form? Is not almoſt every ſingle *man of war* a mere floating hell? Where is there to be found more conſummate wickedneſs, a more full, daring contempt of God, and all his laws, except in the bottomleſs pit? But here deſcription fails: and the goodneſs of God endureth yet daily! But *ſhall I not viſit for theſe things, ſaith the Lord? Shall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?* O that the *proſpect* of national judgments may ſuffice! That we may remember ourſelves, and turn unto the Lord our God, before his long-ſuffering mercy is at an end, and he pours out the vials of his wrath upon us!

But how ſmall ground have we as yet to hope for this? For who will now *ſuffer the word of exhortation?* How few will *endure ſound doctrine*, and the honeſt, cloſe application of it? Do they not *ſay unto the ſeers, ſee not; and unto the prophets, propheſy ſmooth things?* And if a man will do thus, if he will *ſew pillows to all armholes*, and *cauſe the Holy One of* Iſrael *to ceaſe from before them; if he will propheſy of wine and ſtrong drink, he ſhall even be the prophet of this people.*

31. I am ſenſible, how nice a ſubject this is, and

and how extremely difficult it is ſo to ſpeak, as neither to ſay too little nor too much, neither more nor leſs than the cauſe of God requires. I know alſo, that it is abſolutely impoſſible, ſo to ſpeak as not to give offence. But whoſoever is offended, I dare not to be ſilent; neither may I refrain from plainneſs of ſpeech: only I will endeavour to uſe all the tenderneſs I can conſiſtently with that plainneſs.

In tender love then I aſk, are there none among us (I ſpeak to you, my brethren, who are prieſts and prophets of the Lord, ſet apart to *miniſter in holy things*, and to *declare the word of the Lord*) Are there none among us who commit *lewdneſs*, as did thoſe by whom *Iſrael was defiled?* Hath not the Lord ſeen an horrible thing, in ſome of the prophets of this land alſo, even, that *they commit adultery, and* (to conceal it) *walk in lies?* God forbid that I ſhould affirm this. I only propoſe (not maintain) the queſtion. If there be ſuch a wretch, I pray God to ſtrike him to the heart, and to ſay, *Thou art the man!*

Are there none of you, like them, *mighty to drink wine, men of ſtrength to mingle ſtrong drink?* Yea, are there none, that *err through ſtrong drink, that are ſwallowed up of wine?* Are there not found thoſe who ſay, *I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourſelves with ſtrong drink: and to-morrow ſhall be as this day, and much more abundant?*

* Alas,

* Alas, my brother! Is this the voice of a *minister of* Christ? *A steward of the mysteries of* God? Suppose you find at any time trouble and heaviness, *is there no help for you in your* God? Is not the God whom you serve able to deliver you from any plague or trouble? Is the being *drunk with wine* a better relief, than the being *filled with his Spirit?* Do you not understand this? Do you *not know the* Lord? Take heed you do not destroy both your own soul and them that hear you! O beware! If you know not his love, fear his power! Make haste to flee from the wrath to come, lest he smite you with a curse great as your sin, and sweep you away from the face of the earth.

32. Can such as you be said, to *honour* or *fear* God, any more than those spoken of by *Malachi?* May not God complain, *These priests have violated my law and prophaned my holy things?* Yea, whensoever you presume with those unhallowed hands, to touch the mysteries of God: whensoever you utter his name or his word with those unhallowed lips! But is it on this account only that God may say, *Both prophet and priest are prophane?* May he not add, *they have put no difference between the holy and prophane; therefore I am prophaned among them.* For is it not so? Do *you* put a difference between the holy and prophane, him that seareth God, and him that seareth him not? Do you put an effectual difference between them, even in the most solemn office of our religion?

gion? At the table of the Lord, do you take care to *ſeparate the precious from the vile?* To receive all thoſe who (as you may reaſonably believe) *draw near with penitent hearts and lively faith*, and utterly to reject thoſe who teſtify againſt themſelves, that they are without hope and without God in the world?

Nay, who dares repel one of the greateſt men in his pariſh from the Lord's table? Even tho' he be a drunkard or a common ſwearer? Yea tho' he openly deny the Lord that bought him? Mr. *Stonhouſe did* this once. But what was the event? The gentleman brought an action againſt him, for the terror of all ſuch inſolent fellows, in ſucceeding times.

33. O my brethren, is it not for want of your making this difference, as well as for many other abominations that with regard to ſome among us, (how many God knoweth) that ſcripture is now alſo fulfilled. *His watchmen are blind, they are ignorant, they are ſhepherds that cannot underſtand.—The Lord hath poured out upon them the ſpirit of deep ſleep, and hath cloſed their eyes; the prophets and the ſeers hath he covered. And the viſion of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is ſealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, ſaying, Read this, I pray thee; and he ſaith, I cannot; for it is ſealed.*

If you aſk what thoſe other abominations are? I will ſpeak, in love and in the ſpirit of meekneſs. There are found among us *covetous* men,

men

men *who mind earthly things*, who *seek themselves* and not Christ crucified, who *love the world, and the things of the world:* men in whom these words are still fulfilled, *Who is there among you that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on my altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you saith the Lord of hosts.* Yea, are there not those at this day, (O that I might be found to fear where no fear is!) who *make themselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel?* Are there not those, who now *enlarge their desire as hell, who are as death and cannot be satisfied?* Who, though they want neither food to eat nor raiment to put on, yet seek more and more *preferment?* Who are continually studying to *join house to house, and to lay field to field?* To grow rich in the service of that Master, who himself *had not where to lay his head?* Is it not to these that those dreadful words belong, enough to cause the ears of him that heareth to tingle, *They are greedy dogs which never can have enough; they all look to their own way*, (not the way of their Lord) *every one for his gain, from his quarter.*

Is it strange, if among these there should be some, who are cruel, *oppressive* men? Inasmuch as covetousness knows no mercy, nor can a lover of money be a lover of his neighbour. Have not some been known even to *grind the face of the poor?* To strip, rather than cloath the naked? Some, who while they cried out, *as the horseleech, Give, give,* would take, if it was not given; like

like those of old who said, *Thou shalt give it me now, and if not, I will take it by force:* or those spoken of by *Micah*, *The prophets bite with their teeth, and cry peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him.* Very great is the sin of these men before the Lord. If there be ten such now in the land, may God smite them this day with terror and astonishment, that they may have no rest in their bones till their sin is done away!

34. Are *you* as watchful and zealous to gain souls, as those are to gain the gold that perisheth? Do you know by experience what that meaneth, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up?* Or are you one of those watchmen who do not watch at all? Who neither know nor care when the sword cometh? Of whom the prophet saith, *They are dumb dogs that cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.*

* Can it be supposed, that such shepherds will *feed the flock?* Will *give to every one his portion of meat in due season?* Will these *warn every man, and exhort every man, that they may present every man perfect in* Christ Jesus? Will they take care to "know all their flock by name, not forgetting their men-servants and women-servants?" Will they enquire into the state of every soul committed to their charge? And watch over each with all tenderness and long-suffering, *as they that must give account?* Marking how they either fall or rise? How these wax *weary and faint in their*

their mind ; and thoſe *grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour* Jeſus Chriſt ? Who can do this, unleſs his whole heart be in the work ? Unleſs he deſire nothing but to *ſpend and be ſpent for them* ; and *count not his life dear unto himſelf*, ſo he may *preſent them blameleſs* in the day of the Lord Jeſus.

Can any ſhepherd do this (and if he do not, he will never *give any account with joy*) who imagines, he has little more to do, then *to preach* once or twice a week ? That this is the *main point*, the *chief part* of the office, which he hath taken upon himſelf before God ? What groſs ignorance is this ? What a total miſtake of the truth ? What a miſerable blunder touching the *whole nature* of his office ? It is indeed a very great thing, to ſpeak in the name of God ; it might make him that is the ſtouteſt of heart tremble, if he conſidered, that every time he ſpeaks to others, his *own ſoul* is at ſtake. But great, inexpreſſibly great as this is, it is perhaps the leaſt part of our work. To *ſeek and ſave that which is loſt*, to bring ſouls from Satan to God, to inſtruct the ignorant, to reclaim the wicked, to convince the gainſayer ; to direct their feet into the way of peace, and then keep them therein ; to follow them ſtep by ſtep, leaſt they turn out of the way, and adviſe them in their doubts and temptations ; to lift up them that fall, to refreſh them that are faint, and to comfort the weak-hearted ; to adminiſter various helps, as

the variety of occaſions require, according to their ſeveral neceſſities: theſe are parts of our office; all this we have undertaken at the peril of our own ſoul. A ſenſe of this made that holy man of old cry out, "I marvel if any ruler in "the church ſhall be ſaved;" and a greater than him ſay, in the fulneſs of his heart, *who is ſufficient for theſe things?*

34. But *who is* not *ſufficient* for theſe things, *for* the taking care of a pariſh, though it contain twenty thouſand ſouls, if this implies no more than the taking care to preach there, once or twice a-week; and to procure one to read prayers on the other days, and do what is called the *pariſh duty?* Is any trade in the nation ſo eaſy as this? Is not any man ſufficient for it, without any more talents either of nature or grace, than a ſmall degree of common underſtanding? But O! what manner of ſhepherds are thoſe, who look no farther into the nature of their office, who ſink no deeper into the importance of it than this! Were they not ſuch as theſe concerning whom the *word of the Lord came unto* Ezekiel, *ſaying, Woe be to the ſhepherds that feed themſelves: ſhould not the ſhepherds feed the flock? Ye eat the fat, and ye cloathe you with the wool; but ye feed not the flock. The diſeaſed have ye not ſtrengthened, neither have ye healed that which was ſick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken; neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye ſought that which was loſt———*

And

And they were ſcattered, becauſe there was no ſhepherd, and they became meat to all the beaſts of the field. Yea, my flock was ſcattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did ſearch or ſeek after them.

I conjure you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jeſus, the great ſhepherd of the ſheep, who hath bought them and as with his own blood, apply this each to his own ſoul. Let every man look unto God, and ſay, " Lord, *Is it I?* Am I one of theſe idle, careleſs, indolent ſhepherds, that feed myſelf, not the flock? Am I one that cannot bark, ſlothful, ſleeping, lying down, loving to ſlumber? One of thoſe who have not ſtrengthened that which was diſeaſed, neither healed that which was ſick! *Search me, O Lord, and prove me; try out my reins and my heart. Look well if there be any way of wickedneſs in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting.*"

35. " Have I not, at leaſt, *healed the hurt of thy people ſlightly?* Have I not ſaid, *Peace, peace, when there was no peace?*"—How many are they alſo that do this? Who do not ſtudy to ſpeak what is *true*, eſpecially to the rich and great, ſo much as what is *pleaſing?* Who flatter *honourable* ſinners, inſtead of telling them plain, *How can ye eſcape the damnation of hell?* O what an account have *you* to make, if there be a God that judgeth the earth? Will he not require at *your* hands the blood of all theſe ſouls, of whom *ye are the betrayers and murderers?* Well ſpake the pro-

phets of your fathers, in whoſe ſteps ye now tread. *They have ſeduced my people, and one built up a wall, and another daubed it with untempered mortar. They ſtrengthen the hands of the evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedneſs. They propheſy lies in my name ſaith the Lord. They ſay unto them that deſpiſe me, ye ſhall have peace, and unto them that walk after the imagination of their own heart, no evil ſhall come upon you.*

How great will *your* damnation be, who *deſtroy* ſouls, inſtead of *ſaving* them? Where will you appear, or how will you ſtand, *in that great and terrible day of the Lord!* How will ye lift up your head, when *the Lord deſcends from heaven, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on his adverſaries!* More eſpecially on thoſe who have ſo betrayed his cauſe, and done Satan's work under the banner of Chriſt! With what voice wilt *thou* ſay, "Behold me, Lord, and the ſheep whom thou badſt given me, whom I gave to the devil, and told them they were in the way to heaven, till they dropped into hell?"

Were they not juſt ſuch ſhepherds of ſouls as you are concerning whom God ſpake by *Jeremiah*, *Many paſtors have deſtroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot; they have made my pleaſant portion a deſolate wilderneſs:* By *Ezekiel*, *There is a conſpiracy of her prophets, like a roaring lion, ravening the prey, they have devoured ſouls:* And by *Zechariah*, *Thus ſaith the*

the Lord, feed the flock of the ſlaughter, whoſe poſſeſſors ſlay them, and hold themſelves not guilty; and they that ſell them ſay, bleſſed be the Lord, for I am rich; and their own ſhepherds pity them not.

* 86. Is not this the *real ground*, the principal *reaſon* of the preſent *contempt of the clergy?* And long ſince was it aſſigned as ſuch, by him who cannot lie. The ſame men of old, who *made the Lord's people to tranſgreſs*, thereby *made themſelves vile.* They were *deſpiſed* both as the natural effect, and the judicial puniſhment of their *wickedneſs.* And the ſame cauſe the prophet obſerves to have produced the ſame effect, many hundred years after this. *Ye are departed out of the way ſaith the* Lord; *ye have cauſed many to ſtumble—therefore have I alſo made you* contemptible, *and baſe before all the people.*

I have now, brethren, *delivered mine own ſoul* and in ſo doing, I have (as I propoſed at firſt) *uſed great plainneſs of ſpeech*, as not ſtudying *to pleaſe men, but the Lord.* The event I leave to him in whoſe name I have ſpoken, and who hath the hearts of all men in his hand.

I *have brought you heavy tidings this* day, and yet I cannot but be perſuaded, that ſome of you will not *count me your enemy, becauſe I tell you the truth.* O that all of us may *taſte* the good word which we *declare*! May *receive* that knowledge of ſalvation, which we are commanded to *preach* unto every creature, thro' the remiſſion of

ſins! My heart's deſire is, that all of us to whom *is committed the miniſtry of reconciliation*, may ourſelves be reconciled to God, thro' the blood of the everlaſting covenant: that he may be henceforth unto us a God, and we may be unto him a people: that we may all *know* as well as *preach*, the Lord, *from the leaſt unto the greateſt*: even by that token, *I am merciful to thy unrighteouſneſs: thy ſins I remember no more!*

III. 1. I have hitherto ſpoken more immediately to thoſe, who profeſs themſelves members of the *church of* England. But inaſmuch as I am a debtor alſo to thoſe who do not, my deſign is now, to apply to them alſo; and briefly to ſhew, wherein (I fear) they are ſeverally inconſiſtent with *their own principles*.

I begin with thoſe who are at the ſmalleſt diſtance from us, whether they are termed *Preſbyterians* or *Independents*. Of whom in general I cannot but have a widely different opinion, from that I entertained ſome years ago: as having ſince then converſed with many among them, *in whom the root of the matter is* undeniably *found*; and who labour *to keep a conſcience void of offence both toward God and toward man*. I cannot therefore doubt, but every ſerious man, of either one or the other denomination, does utterly condemn all that inward as well as outward unholineſs, which has been above deſcribed.

But

But do you, as a people, avoid what you condemn? Are no whoremongers or adulterers found among you? No children disobedient to their parents? No servants that are slothful or careless? That *answer again?* That do not *honour their masters as is meet in the Lord?* Are there none among you that censure or *speak evil of the ruler of their people?* Are there no drunkards, no gluttons, no luxurious men, no regular *epicures*, none *whose belly is their God*, who, as their fortune permits, *fare sumptuously every day?* Have you no *dishonest dealers*, no *unfair traders*, no *usurers*, or *extortioners?* Have you no *liars*, either for gain, or for good manners, so called? Are you clear of *ceremony* and *compliment?* Alas, you are sensible, in most if not all these respects, you have now small preheminence over us.

How much more sensible must you be of this, if you do not rest on the surface, but enquire into the bottom of religion, the religion of the heart? For, what inward unholiness, what evil tempers are among us, which have not a place among you also? You likewise bewail that ignorance of God, that want of faith and of the love of God and man, that inward idolatry of various kinds, that pride, ambition and vanity, which rule in the hearts even of those who still have *the form of godliness*. You lament before God, the deep covetousness that *eats so many souls as doth a gangrene*; and perhaps are sometimes

ready to cry out, *help, Lord, for there is* ſcarce *one godly man left.* Lay to thine hand *: for the faithful are miniſhed from the children of men!*

2. And yet you retain *the truth that is after godlineſs*, at leaſt, as to the ſubſtance of it. You own what is laid down in ſcripture, both touching the *nature* and *condition* of *juſtification* and *ſalvation.* And with regard to the *author of faith and ſalvation*, you have always avowed, even in the face of your enemies, that *it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleaſure :* that it is his Spirit alone who *teacheth us all things*, all we know of *the deep things of God :* that every true believer has *an unction from the Holy One* to *lead him into all* neceſſary *truth :* that *becauſe we are ſons, God ſendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father ;* and that *this Spirit, beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God.*

How is it then, my brethren (ſo I can call you now, although I could not have done it heretofore ;) how is it, that the generality of you alſo are fallen from your ſtedfaſtneſs ? In the times of perſecution ye ſtood as a rock, tho' *all the waves and ſtorms went over* you. But who can bear eaſe and fulneſs of bread ! How are you changed, ſince theſe came upon you ! Do not many of you now (practically I mean) put ſomething elſe, in the room of *faith that worketh by love ?* Do not ſome of you ſuppoſe that gravity and compoſedneſs

poſedneſs of behaviour, are the main parts of Chriſtianity? Eſpecially, provided you neither ſwear, nor take the name of God in vain. Do not others imagine, that to abſtain from idle ſongs, and thoſe faſhionable diverſions commonly uſed by perſons of their fortune, is almoſt the whole of religion? To which if they add family prayer, and a ſtrict obſervation of the ſabbath, then doubtleſs all is well! Nay my brethren, this is well, ſo far as it goes: but how little a way does it go toward Chriſtianity? All theſe things, you cannot but ſee, are merely *external*; whereas Chriſtianity is an *inward* thing; without which the moſt beautiful outward form is lighter than vanity.

Do not others of you reſt in *conviction?* Or good *deſires?* Alas, what do theſe avail? A man may be *convinced* he is ſick, yea deeply convinced, and yet never recover. He may *deſire* food, yea with earneſt deſire, and nevertheleſs periſh with hunger. And thus I may be *convinced* I am a ſinner; but this will not juſtify me before God. And I may *deſire* ſalvation (perhaps by fits and ſtarts, for many years) and yet be loſt for ever. Come cloſe then to the point, and keep to your principles. Have *you* received the Holy Ghoſt; the Spirit which is of God, and is beſtowed by him on all believers, *that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God?* The time is ſhort. Do you experience now that *unction from the Holy One?* Without which you confeſs *out-*

ward religion, whether negative or poſitive is nothing. Nay, and inward *conviction* of our wants is nothing, unleſs thoſe wants are in fact ſupplied. Good *deſires* alſo are nothing, unleſs we actually attain what we are ſtirred up to deſire. For ſtill, *if any man* have *not the Spirit of* Chriſt, whatever he deſires, *he is none of his*. O my brother, beware you ſtop not ſhort! Beware you never acount yourſelf a Chriſtian, no not in the loweſt degree, till God *hath ſent forth the Spirit of* Chriſt *into* your *heart*, and that *Spirit bear witneſs with* your *ſpirit, that you are a child of God*.

3. One ſtep farther from us, are you who are called (though not by your own choice) *Anabaptiſts*. The ſmallneſs of your number, compared to that of either the *Preſbyterians*, or thoſe of the *church*, makes it eaſier for you to have an exact knowledge of the behaviour of all your members, and to put away from among you every one that *walketh not according to the doctrine you have received*.

But is this done? Do all *your* members adorn the goſpel? Are they all *holy as he which hath called us is holy?* I fear not. I have known ſome inſtances to the contrary; and doubtleſs you know many more. There are unholy, outwardly unholy men, in *your* congregations alſo: men that prophane either the name or the day of the Lord; that do not honour their natural or civil parents; that know not how to poſſeſs their bodies

bodies in ſanctification and honour; that are intemperate, either in meat or drink, gluttonous, ſenſual, luxurious; that variouſly offend againſt juſtice, mercy or truth, in their intercourſe with their neighbour, and do not walk by that *royal law, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.*

But how is this conſiſtent with your leading principle, " That no man ought to be admitted to baptiſm, till he has that repentance whereby we forſake ſin, and living faith in God, through Chriſt?"

For if no man ought to be admitted into a church or congregation, who has not actual faith and repentance, then neither ought any who has them not, to continue in any congregation. And conſequently an open ſinner cannot remain among you, unleſs you practically renounce your main principle.

4. I refer it to your own ſerious conſideration, whether one reaſon, why unholy men are ſtill ſuffered to remain among you, may not be this; that many of you have unawares put *opinion* in the room of *faith* and *repentance?* But how fatal a miſtake is this? Suppoſing your opinion to be true, yet a *true opinion* concerning *repentance* is wholly different from the thing itſelf. And you may have a *true opinion* concerning *faith* all your life and yet die an unbeliever.

Suppoſing therefore the *opinion* of *particular redemption* true, yet how little does it avail toward ſalvation? Nay, were we to ſuppoſe, that

none can be ſaved who do not hold it, it does not follow, that *all will be ſaved* who do. So that if the one proved a man to be in ever ſo *bad a ſtate*, the other would not prove him to be *in a good one.* And conſequently, whoſoever leans on this opinion, *leans on the ſtaff of a broken reed.*

Would to God that ye would mind this one thing, To *make your own calling and election ſure!* That every one of you (leaving the reſt of the world to him that made it) would himſelf *repent and believe the goſpel!* Not repent alone (for then you know only the baptiſm of *John*) but believe and be *baptized with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire.* Are you ſtill a ſtranger to that inward baptiſm, wherewith all true believers are baptized? May the Lord conſtrain you to cry out, *How am I ſtraitened till it be accompliſhed!* Even till the love of God inflame your heart, and conſume all your vile affections. Be not content with any thing leſs than this! It is this loving faith alone which opens our way into *the general church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven!* Which giveth us to *enter within the veil, where* Jeſus *our fore-runner is gone before us!*

5. There is a ſtill wider difference in *ſome* points, between us and the people uſually termed *Quakers.* But not in *theſe* points. You, as well as we, condemn *all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men*; all thoſe *works* of the devil which were recited above, and all thoſe *tempers* from which they ſpring.

You

You agree, That we are all to be *taught of* God; and to be *led by his Spirit:* that the Spirit alone *reveals* all truth, and *inſpires* all holineſs: that by his inſpiration men attain *perfect love*, the love which *purifies them as he is pure:* and that through this knowledge and love of God, they have power to *do always ſuch things as pleaſe him*; to worſhip God, a Spirit, according to his own will, that is, *in ſpirit and in truth.*

Hence you infer, That *formal worſhip* is not acceptable to God, but that alone that ſprings from God in the heart: you infer alſo, that they who are led by him, will uſe great *plainneſs of ſpeech*, and great *plainneſs of dreſs*, ſeeking no *outward adorning*, but *only the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit.*

I will look no farther now, than ſimply to equire, Whether you are conſiſtent with theſe principles?

To begin with the latter: "He that is led by the Spirit will uſe great plainneſs of ſpeech."

* *You* would have ſaid, "will uſe the plain language." But that term leads you into a grand miſtake. That term, "*the* plain language," naturally leads you to think of *one particular* way of ſpeaking; as if *plainneſs of ſpeech* implied no more, than the uſe of that *particular form.*

* Alas! my brethren! Know ye not, that your anceſtors deſigned this, only as a *ſpecimen* of *plain*

plain language? And is it poſſible that you ſhould miſtake the ſample for the whole bale of cloth?

Conſult the light God has given you, and you muſt ſee that *plainneſs of ſpeech* does not lie in *a ſingle point*, but implies an open, undiſguiſed ſincerity, a child-like ſimplicity *in all we ſpeak.*

* I do not deſire you to refrain from ſaying *thou* or *thee.* I would not ſpend ten words about it. But I deſire you whenever you ſpeak at all, to ſpeak the truth, and nothing but the truth: I deſire your words may always be the picture of your heart. This is truly *plain language.*

* Either do not pretend to *plain ſpeech* at all, or be *uniformly plain.* Are you ſo? I pray, conſider. Do you never *compliment?* I do not ſuppoſe you ſay, "Sir, your very humble ſervant." But do you ſay no *civil things?* Do you never *flatter?* Do you not *commend* any man or woman to their face? Perhaps farther than you do behind their back. Is this *plainneſs of ſpeech?* Do you never *diſſemble?* Do you ſpeak to all perſons, high or low, rich or poor, juſt what you think, neither more nor leſs, and in the ſhorteſt and cleareſt manner you can? If not, what a mere jeſt is your *plain language?* You carry your condemnation in your own breaſt.

6. You hold alſo, That "he which is led by the Spirit, will uſe great *plainneſs of dreſs,* ſeeking

ing no *outward adorning*, but only the *ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit*."

And that, in particular, " he will leave *gold and coſtly apparel*, to thoſe who know not God."

* Now I appeal to every ſerious, reaſonable man among you, Do your people act conſiſtently with this principle? Do not many of your women wear *gold* upon their very feet? And many of your men uſe *ornaments of gold?* Are you a ſtranger to theſe things? Have you not ſeen with your eyes (ſuch triflings as will ſcarce bear the naming) their *canes* and *ſnuff-boxes* glitter, even in your ſolemn aſſembly, while ye were waiting together upon God? Surely, they are not yet ſo loſt to modeſty, as to pretend, that they do not uſe them by way of *ornament*. If they do not, if it be only out of neceſſity, a *plain oaken ſtick* will ſupply the place of the one, and a piece of *horn* or *tin* will unexceptionably anſwer all the reaſonable ends of the other.

* To ſpeak freely (and do not count me your enemy for this) you cannot but obſerve upon cool reflection, that you retain juſt ſo much of your *antient* practice, as leaves your *preſent* without excuſe; as makes the inconſiſtency between the one and the other, glaring and undeniable. For inſtance: this woman is too ſtrict a *Quaker*, to lay out a *ſhilling* in a *necklace*. Very well; but ſhe is not too ſtrict to lay out *fourſcore guineas* in a repeating *watch*. Another would not

for

for the world wear any *lace*, no, not an *edging* round her cap. But she will wear *point*; and sees no harm in it at all, though it should be of twelve times the price. In one kind of *apron* or *handkerchief* she dares not lay out twenty shillings; but in another sort, lays out twenty pounds. And what multitudes of you are very jealous, as to the *colour* and *form* of your apparel, (the least important of all the circumstances that relate to it) while in the most important, the expence, they are without any concern at all? They will not put on a *scarlet* or *crimson* stuff, but the richest *velvet*, so it be black or grave. They will not touch a coloured *ribband*; but will cover themselves with a *stiff silk* from head to foot. They cannot bear *purple:* but make no scruple at all of being cloathed in *fine linen:* yea, to such a degree, that the *linen of the Quakers* is grown almost into a proverb.

Surely you cannot be ignorant, that the sinfulness of *fine apparel*, lies chiefly in the *expensiveness*. In that it is robbing God and the poor: it is defrauding the fatherless and widow; it is wasting the food of the hungry, and with-holding his raiment from the naked, to consume it on our own lusts.

7. Let it not be said, that this affects only *a few* among you, and those, of the *younger* and *lighter* sort. Yes it does; your whole body: for why do you, who are *elder* and *graver*, suffer such things? Why do ye not vehemently reprove them?

them? And if thy repent not, in ſpite of all worldly conſiderations, expel them out of your ſociety? In conniving at their ſin, you make it your own; *you*, eſpecially who are *preachers*. Do you ſay, "They cannot bear it; they will not hear:" Alas, into what ſtate then are ye fallen! But whether they will bear it or not, what is that to thee? Thou art to *ſpeak, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear*. To ſay the very truth, I am afraid, you rather ſtrengthen their hands in their wickedneſs. For you not only † do not teſtify againſt it in the congre-

† You ſay, "You *do teſtify againſt it* in the congregation." Againſt what? "Againſt gay and gaudy apparel." I grant it. But this is not the thing I ſpeak of. You quite miſtake my mark. Do you teſtify againſt the *coſtlineſs* of their apparel, however plain and grave it may be? Againſt the *price* of the velvet, the linen, the ſilk, or raiment of whatever kind? If you do this frequently and explicitly, you are clear. If not, own and amend the fault.

It is eaſy to diſcern how your people fell into this ſnare of the devil. You were at firſt a poor, deſpiſed, afflicted people. Then, what ſome of you had to ſpare, was little enough to relieve the needy members of your own ſociety. In a few years you increaſed in goods, and were able to relieve more than your *own* poor. But you did not beſtow all that you had to ſpare from them, on the poor belonging to other ſocieties. It remained either to lay it up, or to expend it in ſuperfluities. Some choſe one way, and ſome the other.

* Lay this deeply to heart, ye who are now a poor, deſpiſed, afflicted people. Hitherto ye are not able to relieve your own poor. But if ever *your* ſubſtance increaſe, ſee that ye be not ſtraitened in your own bowels, that ye fall not in the ſame ſnare of the devil. Before any of you either lay up treaſures on earth,

congregation, but even ſit at their table and reprove them not. Why then, thou alſo art one of *the dumb dogs that cannot bark, ſleeping, lying down, loving to ſlumber.*

I fix this charge upon every *preacher*, in particular, who ſaw a young woman, daughter to one of the *Quakers* in *London*, going to be married in apparel ſuitable to her diamond buckle, which coſt a hundred guineas. Could you ſee this, and not call heaven and earth to witneſs againſt it? Then I witneſs againſt thee, in the name of the Lord, thou art a *blind leader of the blind:* thou *ſtraineſt a gnat and ſwalloweſt a camel!*

Verily the ſin both of teachers and hearers, is herein exceeding great. And the little attempts toward plainneſs of apparel, which are ſtill obſervable among you (I mean, in the *colour* and *form* of your cloaths, and the *manner of* putting them on) only teſtify againſt you, that you were once what you know in your hearts you are not now.

8. I come now to your main principle, "We are all to be *taught of* God, to be *inſpired* and *led by his Spirit.* And then we ſhall *worſhip* him, not with dead *form*, but *in ſpirit and in truth.*"

Theſe are deep and weighty words. But many

or indulge needleſs expence of any kind, I pray the Lord God to ſcatter you to the corners of the earth, and blot out your name from under heaven!

many hold faſt the words, and are utterly ignorant of their meaning. Is not this an exceeding common caſe? Are not you conſcious, abundance of your friends have done ſo? With whom the being *taught of God* and *led by his Spirit*, are mere words of courſe, that mean juſt nothing. And their crude and indigeſted accounts, of the things they did not underſtand, have raiſed that deep prejudice againſt theſe great truths, which we find in the generality of men.

Do ſome of you aſk, "But doſt thou acknowledge *the inward principle?*" I do, my friends: and I would to God every one of you acknowledged it as much. I ſay, all religion is either *empty ſhew*, or *perfection by inſpiration*; in other words, The obedient love of God, by the ſupernatural knowledge of God: yea, all that which *is not of faith is ſin*; all which does not ſpring from this loving knowledge of God; which knowledge cannot begin, or ſubſiſt one moment, without *immediate inſpiration*: not only all public worſhip, and all private prayer, but every thought, in common life, and word and work. What think you of this? Do you not ſtagger? Dare you carry *the inward principle* ſo far? Do you acknowledge it to be the very truth? But alas! what is the acknowledging it? Doſt thou experience this principle in thyſelf: What ſaith thy heart? Does God dwell therein? And doth it now eccho to the voice of God? Haſt thou the *continual inſpiration* of his Spirit, filling thy heart

heart with his love, as with a well of water, ſpringing up into everlaſting life?

* 9. Art thou acquainted with the *leading of his Spirit*, not by notion only, but by living experience? I fear very many of you talk of this, who do not ſo much as know what it means. How does the Spirit of God *lead* his children, to this, or that particular action? Do you imagine, it is by *blind impulſe* only? By *moving* you to do it, you know not why? Not ſo. He leads us by our *eye*, at leaſt as much as by the *hand*; and by *light* as well as by *heat*. He *ſhews* us the way wherein we ſhould go, as well as *incites* us to walk therein. For example. Here is a man ready to periſh with hunger. How am *I led by the Spirit* to relieve him? Firſt, by his *convincing* me, it is the will of God I ſhould, and ſecondly by his filling my heart with *love* toward him. Both this *light* and this *heat* are the gift of God; are wrought in me by the ſame Spirit: who *leads* me, by this *conviction* as well as *love*, to go and feed that man. This is the plain, rational account of the *ordinary* leading of the Spirit. But how far from that which ſome have given!

* Art *thou* thus led by the Spirit to every good word and work? Till God had thereby made thy faith perfect? Doſt thou know what *faith* is? It is a loving, obedient ſight of a preſent and reconciled God. Now where this is, there is no *dead form*; neither can be, ſo long as it continues.

But

But all that is ſaid or done is full of God, full of Spirit and life and power.

10. But perhaps, as much as you talk of them, you do not know the difference between *form* and *Spirit*; or between worſhipping God in a *formal* way, and worſhipping him *in ſpirit and in truth*.

The Lord is that Spirit. The ſeeing and feeling and loving him is ſpiritual *life*. And whatever is ſaid or done in the ſight or love of God, that is full of *ſpirit and life*. All beſide this is *form*, mere dead *form*; whether it be in our public addreſſes to God, or in our private; or in our worldly buſineſs, or in our daily converſation.

* But if ſo, how poor and mean and narrow have your views and conceptions been! You was afraid of *formality* in *public worſhip*. And reaſon good. But was you afraid of it no where elſe? Did not you conſider, that *formality* in *common life*, is alſo an abomination to the Lord? And that it can have no place in any thing we ſay or do, but ſo far as we forget God? O watch againſt it in every place, every moment, that you may every moment ſee and love God: and conſequently, at all times and in all places, worſhip him *in Spirit and in truth*.

My brethren, permit me to add a few words, in tender love to your ſouls. Do not you *lean* too much on the ſpirit and power which you believe reſted upon your *forefathers?* Suppoſe it did!

did! Will that avail *you*, if you do not drink into the ſame ſpirit? And how evident is this! That whatever you once were, ye are now *ſhorn of your ſtrength*. Ye are weak and become like other men. The Lord is well nigh departed from you. Where is now the ſpirit, the life, the power? Be not offended with my plain dealing, when I beſeech *you* who are able to weigh things calmly, to open your eyes and ſee multitudes even in the church, purſuing, yea and attaining the *ſubſtance* of ſpiritual life, and leaving unto you the *ſhadow*. Nay a ſtill greater evil is before you: for if ye find not ſome effectual means to prevent it, your riſing generation will utterly caſt off the *ſhadow* as well as the *ſubſtance*.

11. There is an abundantly greater difference ſtill, according to your own account, between us who profeſs ourſelves members of the church of *England*, and you who are members of the church of *Rome*. But notwithſtanding this, do you not agrée with us in condemning the vices above recited? Prophaneneſs, drunkenneſs, whoredom, adultery, theft, diſobedience to parents, and ſuch like? And how unhappily do you agree with us in *practiſing* the very vices which you *condemn?*

And yet you acknowledge (nay and frequently contend for this with a peculiar earneſtneſs) that every Chriſtian is called to be *zealous of good works*, as well as to *deny himſelf and take up his croſs daily*. How then do you depart from your

own

own principles, when you are gluttons, drunkards or epicures? When you live at your eaſe, in all the elegance and voluptuouſneſs of a plentiful fortune! How will you reconcile the being adorned with gold, arrayed in purple and fine linen, and faring ſumptuouſly every day, with the *denying yourſelf and taking up your croſs daily?* Surely while you indulge the deſire of the fleſh, the deſire of the eye, and the pride of life, the excellent rules of ſelf-denial that abound in your own writers, leave you of all men moſt inexcuſable.

12. Neither can this ſelf-indulgence be reconciled, with the being *zealous of good works.* For by this needleſs and continual expence, you diſable yourſelf from doing good. You bind your own hands. You make it impoſſible for you to do that good which otherwiſe you might. So that you injure the poor in the ſame proportion as you poiſon your own ſoul. You might have cloathed the naked; but what was due to them, was thrown away on your coſtly apparel. You might have fed the hungry, entertained the ſtranger, relieved them that were ſick or in priſon. But the ſuperfluities of your own table ſwallowed up that whereby they ſhould have been profited. And ſo this waſting of thy Lord's goods, is an inſtance of complicated wickedneſs; ſince hereby thy poor brother periſheth, for whom Chriſt died.

I will

I will not recommend to you either the writings or examples of thoſe whom you account *hereticks*, (although ſome of theſe, if you could view them with impartial eyes, might *provoke you to jealouſy.)* But O! that God would write in your hearts the rules of ſelf-denial and love, laid down by *Thomas a Kempis!* Or that you would follow both in this and in good works, that burning and ſhining light of your own church, the Marquis *de Renty!* Then would all who know and loved the Lord rejoice to acknowledge you as the *church of the living God:* when ye were zealous of every good word and wôrk; and abſtained from all appearance of evil: when it was hereby ſhewn that you were filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and delivered from all unholy tempers: when ye were all *unblameable and unrebukable, without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, ſhewing forth* to all Jews, infidels and hereticks, by your active, patient, ſpotleſs love of God and man, *the praiſes of him, who had called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.*

13. Men and brethren, *Children of the ſeed of Abraham*, ſuffer me to ſpeak a few words to you alſo; you who do not allow, that Meſſiah *the Prince is* already come and *cut off*. However you ſo far hear *Moſes* and the prophets, as to allow, 1. That *it is the inſpiration of the Holy One, which giveth man underſtanding*, and that all the true children

children of God *are taught of God.* 2. That the ſubſtance both of the law and the prophets, is contained in that one word, *Thou ſhalt love the* Lord *thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and thy neighbour as thyſelf.* That the ſure fruit of love is obedience, *ceaſing from evil, and doing good.*

And do *you* walk by this rule? Have *you yourſelves* that *inſpiration of the Holy One?* Are *you* taught of God? Hath he opened your underſtanding? Have you the inward knowledge of the moſt High? I fear not. Perhaps you know little more, even of the meaning of the words than a *Mahometan.*

Let us go a little farther. Do you *love the* Lord *your* God *with all your heart, with all your ſoul, with all your ſtrength? Can you* ſay, *Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee?* Do you deſire God at all? Do you deſire to have any thing to do with him, till you can keep the world no longer? Are you not content, ſo you enjoy the good things of earth, to let God ſtand afar off? Only calling upon him now and then, when you cannot well do without him. Why then you do not *love* God at all, tho' you will ſometimes condeſcend to *uſe* him. You *love* the world. This poſſeſſes your *heart.* This therefore is your God. You renounce the God of your fathers, the God of *Iſrael*; you are ſtill *uncircumciſed in heart.* Your own conſcience bears witneſs, you in this

no more hear *Moſes* and the prophets, than you do Jeſus of *Nazareth*.

14. From *Moſes* and the prophets it has been ſhewn, that your forefathers were *a faithleſs and ſtubborn generation*; *a generation which ſet not their hearts aright, and whoſe ſpirit cleaved not ſtedfaſtly unto God*. And this you acknowledge yourſelves. If you are aſked, how is it that the promiſe is not fulfilled? Seeing *the ſcepter is* long ſince *departed from Judah*, why is not *Shiloh* come? Your uſual anſwer is, "becauſe of the ſins of our fathers, God hath delayed his coming." Have *you* then reformed from the ſins of your fathers? Are *you* turned unto the Lord your God? Nay, do ye not tread in the ſame ſteps? Bating that ſingle point of outward idolatry, what abomination did *they* ever commit, which *you* have not committed alſo? Which the generality of you do not commit ſtill, according to your power? If therefore the coming of the Meſſiah was hindered by the ſins of your forefathers, then by the ſame rule, your continuance therein will hinder his coming to the end of the world.

Brethren, my heart's deſire and prayer to God is, that he would *gather the outcaſts of Iſrael*. And I doubt not, but when the fulneſs of the *Gentiles* is come in, then *all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved*. But mean time, is there not great cauſe that ye ſhould ſay with *Daniel*, *O Lord, righteouſneſs belongeth unto thee, but unto us confuſion of face, as at this day, to the men of Judah, and unto all Iſrael. O Lord,*

O Lord, we have ſinned, we have rebelled againſt thee, neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God. Yet O our God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes and behold our deſolations; for we do not preſent our ſupplications before thee for our righteouſneſſes, but for thy great mercies. O Lord hear! O Lord forgive! O Lord, hearken and do! Defer not, for thine own ſake; for thy city and thy people that are called by thy name.

15. I cannot conclude without addreſſing myſelf to you alſo, who do not admit either the *Jewiſh* or *Chriſtian* revelation. But ſtill you deſire to be happy. You own the eſſential difference between vice and virtue; and acknowledge, (as did all the wiſer *Greeks* and *Romans*) that vice cannot conſiſt with happineſs. You allow likewiſe that gratitude and benevolence, ſelf-knowledge and modeſty, mildneſs, temperance, patience and generoſity, are juſtly numbered among virtues; and that ingratitude and malice, envy and ill-nature, pride, inſolence and vanity, gluttony and luxury, covetouſneſs and diſcontent, are vices of the higheſt kind.

Now let us calmly enquire, how far *your* life is conſiſtent with your principles.

* You ſeek happineſs. But you find it not. You come no nearer it with all your labours. You are not happier than you was a year ago. Nay, I doubt you are more unhappy. Why is this, but becauſe you look for happineſs there, where you own it cannot be found? Indeed, what is there

on earth which can long ſatisfy a man of underſtanding? His ſoul is too large for the world he lives in. He wants more room.

Æſtuat infelix auguſto limite Mundi,
Ut brevibus clauſus Gyaris, parvaque ſcripho.

He has already travelled through all which is called pleaſure; diverſions and entertainments of every kind. But among theſe he can find no enjoyment of any depth; they are empty, ſhallow, ſuperficial things: they pleaſed for a while, but the gloſs is gone: and now they are dull and taſteleſs. And what has he next? Only the ſame things again; for this world affords nothing more. It can ſupply him with no change. Go, feed again: but it is upon one diſh ſtill. Thus

Occidit miſeros crambe repetita.

Yet what remedy under the ſun!

* 16. The ſounder judgment, the ſtronger underſtanding you have, the ſooner are you fated with the world. And the more deeply convinced, all that cometh is vanity; fooliſh, inſipid, nauſeous. You ſee the foibles of men in ſo much clearer a light, and have the keener ſenſe of the emptineſs of life. Here you are, a poor unſatisfied inhabitant of an unquiet world; turning your weary eyes on this ſide and on that ſide: ſeeking reſt, but finding none. You ſeem to be

out

out of your place: neither the perſons nor things that ſurround you are *ſuch as you want.* You have a confuſed idea of *ſomething* better than all this; but you know not where to find it. You are always gaſping for *ſomething* which you cannot attain, no, not if you range to the uttermoſt parts of the earth.

But this is not all. You are not only *negatively* unhappy, as finding nothing whereon to ſtay the weight of your ſoul; but *poſitively* ſo, becauſe you are unholy: you are miſerable, becauſe you are vicious. Are you not vicious? Are you then full of gratitude to him, who giveth you life and breath, and all things? Not ſo; you rather ſpurn his gifts, and murmur at him that gave them. How often has your heart ſaid, God did not uſe you well? How often have you queſtioned either his wiſdom or goodneſs? Was this well done? What kind of gratitude is this? It is the beſt you are maſter of. Then take knowledge of yourſelf. Black ingratitude is rooted in your inmoſt frame. You can no more love God, than you can ſee him; or than you can be happy without that love.

Neither (how much ſoever you may pique yourſelf upon it) are you a lover of mankind. Can love and malice conſiſt? Benevolence and envy? O do not put out your own eyes. And are not theſe horrid tempers in *you?* Do not you envy one man, and bear malice or ill-will to another? I know you call theſe diſpoſitions by

ſofter names; but names change not the nature of things. You are pained that one ſhould enjoy what you cannot enjoy yourſelf. Call this what you pleaſe, it is rank envy. You are grieved, that a ſecond enjoys even what you have yourſelf; you rejoice in ſeeing a third unhappy. Do not flatter yourſelf: this is malice, venomous malice, and nothing elſe. And how could you ever think of being happy, with malice and envy in your heart? Juſt as well might you expect to be at eaſe, while you held burning coals in your boſom.

17. I intreat you to reflect, whether there are not other inhabitants in your breaſt, which leave no room for happineſs there. May you not diſcover, through a thouſand diſguiſes, pride? Too high an opinion of yourſelf? Vanity, thirſt of praiſe, even (who would believe it?) of the applauſe of knaves and fools? Unevenneſs or ſourneſs of temper? Proneneſs to anger or revenge? Peeviſhneſs, fretfulneſs, or pining diſcontent? Nay, perhaps even covetouſneſs.—And did you ever think, happineſs could dwell with theſe? Awake out of that ſenſeleſs dream. Think not of reconciling things incompatible. All theſe tempers are eſſential miſery. So long as any of theſe are harboured in your breaſt, you muſt be a ſtranger to inward peace. What avails it you, if there be no other hell? Whenever theſe fiends are let looſe upon you, you will be conſtrained to own,

" Hell

" Hell is where'er I am : myſelf am hell ;"

And can the ſupreme Being love thoſe tempers, which you yourſelf abhor in all but yourſelf ? If not, they imply guilt as well as miſery. Doubtleſs they do. Only enquire of your own heart. How often in the mid career of your vice have you felt a ſecret reproof, which you knew not how to bear, and therefore ſtifled as ſoon as poſſible ?

18. And did not even *this* point at an hereafter ? A future ſtate of exiſtence ? The more reaſonable among you have no doubt of this ; you do not imagine the whole man dies together : although you hardly ſuppoſe the ſoul, once diſengaged, will dwell again in an houſe of clay. But how will your ſoul ſubſiſt without it ? How are *you* qualified for a ſeparate ſtate ? Suppoſe this earthly covering, this vehicle of organized matter, whereby you hold commerce with the material world, were now to drop off! Now, what would you do in the regions of immortality ? You cannot eat or drink there. You cannot indulge either the deſire of the fleſh, the deſire of the eye, or the pride of life. You love only worldly things ; and they are gone, fled as ſmoke, driven away for ever. Here is no poſſibility of ſenſual enjoyments ; and you have a reliſh for nothing elſe. O what a ſeparation is this, from all that you hold dear ! What a breach is made, never to be healed !

But beſide this, you are unholy: full of evil tempers: for you did not put off theſe with the body. You did not leave pride, revenge, malice, envy, diſcontent behind you, when you left the world. And now you are no longer cheared by the light of the ſun, nor diverted by the flux of various objects: but thoſe dogs of hell are let looſe to prey upon your ſoul, with their whole, unrebated ſtrength. Nor is there any hope, that your ſpirit will now ever be reſtored to its original purity; not even that poor hope of a purging fire, ſo elegantly deſcribed by the *Heathen* poet ſome ages before the notion was revived among the doctrines of the *Romiſh* church

—Aliæ tenduntur inanes
Suſpenſæ ad ventos; aliis ſub gurgite vaſto
Infectum eluitur ſcelus, aut exuritur igni—
Donec longa dies, exacto temporis orbe,
Concretam exemit labem, purumque reliquit
Æthereum ſenſum atque aurai ſimplicis ignem.

19. What a great gulph then is fixed between you and happineſs, both in this world and that which is to come? Well may you ſhudder at the thought! More eſpecially when you are about to enter on that untried ſtate of exiſtence. For what a proſpect is this, when you ſtand on the verge of life, ready to launch out into eternity? What can you then think? You ſee nothing before you. All is dark and dreary. On the very

very beſt ſuppoſition, how well may you addreſs your parting ſoul in the words of dying *Adrian:*

" Poor, little, pretty, fluttering thing,
Muſt we no longer live together?
And doſt thou prune thy trembling wing,
To take thy flight thou know'ſt not whither?

Thy pleaſing vein, thy hum'rous folly
Is all neglected, all forgot;
And penſive, wavering, melancholy,
Thou hop'ſt, and fear'ſt thou know'ſt not what."

" Thou know'ſt not what!" Here is the ſting, ſuppoſe there were no other. To be *thou knoweſt not what?* * Not for a month, or year, but thro' the countleſs ages of eternity! What a tormenting uncertainty muſt this be? What racking unwillingneſs muſt it occaſion, to exchange even this known vale of tears, for the unknown valley of the ſhadow of death?

" And is there no cure for this?" Indeed there is an effectual cure; even the knowledge and love of God. There is a knowledge of God which *unveils* eternity, and a love of God which *endears* it. That knowledge makes the great abyſs *viſible*; and *uncertainty* vaniſhes away. That love makes it *amiable* to the ſoul; ſo that *fear* has no more place! But the moment God

ſays, by the welcome angel of death, "Come thou up hither!" She

"Claps the glad wing and towers away,
And mingles with the blaze of day."

20. See ye not, what advantage every way, a *Chriſtian* has over *you?* Probably the reaſon you ſaw it not before was, becauſe you knew none but *nominal* Chriſtians; men who profeſſed to *believe* more (in *their way* of believing) but had no more of the knowledge or love of God than yourſelves. So that with regard to real, *inward religion*, you ſtood upon even ground. And perhaps in many branches of *outward religion*, the advantage was on *your* ſide.

May the Lord, the God of the Chriſtians, either reform theſe wretches, or take them away from the earth! That lay this grand ſtumbling-block in the way of thoſe who deſire to know the will of God!

O ye who deſire to know his will, regard them not! If it be poſſible, blot them out of your remembrance.

They neither *can* nor *will* do you any good. O ſuffer them not to do you harm. Be not prejudiced againſt Chriſtianity by thoſe who know nothing at all of it. Nay, they condemn it, all *real ſubſtantial* Chriſtianity; they ſpeak evil of the thing they know not. They have a kind of

cant

cant word for the whole religion of the heart. They call it *enthuſiaſm*.

I will briefly lay before you the ground of the matter, and appeal to you yourſelves for the reaſonableneſs of it.

* 21. What a miſerable drudgery is the ſervice of God, unleſs I love the God whom I ſerve? But I cannot love one whom I know not. How then can I love God till I know him? And how is it poſſible I ſhould know God, unleſs he make himſelf known unto me? By *analogy* or proportion? Very good. But where is that proportion to be found? What proportion does a creature bear to his Creator? What is the proportion between finite and infinite?

I grant, the *exiſtence* of the creatures demonſtratively ſhews the *exiſtence* of their Creator. The whole creation ſpeaks, that there is a God. But that is not the point in queſtion. I know there is a God. Thus far is clear. But who will ſhew me what that God is. The more I reflect the more convinced I am, that it is not poſſible for any of all the creatures, to take off the veil which is on my heart, that I might diſcern this unknown God; to draw the curtain back which now hangs between, that I may ſee him which is inviſible.

This veil of fleſh now hides him from my ſight. And who is able to make it tranſparent! So that I may perceive *through this glaſs*, God always before me, till I ſee him *face to face*.

I want to know this great God who filleth heaven and earth: who is above, beneath, and

on every ſide, in all places of his dominion; who juſt now beſets me behind and before, and lays his hand upon me. And yet I am no more acquainted with him, than with one of the inhabitants of *Jupiter* or *Saturn*.

O my friend, how will you get one ſtep farther, unleſs God reveal himſelf to your ſoul?

22. And why ſhould this ſeem a thing incredible to you? That God, a Spirit, and the Father of the Spirits of all fleſh, ſhould diſcover himſelf to your ſpirit, which is itſelf the breath of God, *Divinæ Particula Auræ?* Any more than that material things ſhould diſcover themſelves to your material eye. Is it any more repugnant to reaſon, that ſpirit ſhould influence ſpirit, than that matter ſhould influence matter? Nay, is not the former the more intelligible of the two? For there is the utmoſt difficulty in conceiving, how matter ſhould influence matter at all: how that which is totally *paſſive* ſhould *act*. Neither can we rationally account either for gravitation, attraction, or any natural motion whatſoever, but by ſuppoſing in all the finger of God, who alone conquers that *vis inertiæ* which is eſſential to every particle of matter, and worketh all in all.

Now if God ſhould ever open the eyes of your underſtanding, muſt not the love of God be the immediate conſequence? Do you imagine you can ſee God without loving him? Is it poſſible in the nature of things? *Si virtus conſpiceretur occulis,*

occulis, faid the old Heathen, *mirabiles amores excitaret fui.* How much more if you fee him who is the original fountain, the great archetype of all virtue, will that fight raife in you a love that is wonderful, fuch as the gay and bufy world know not of!

23. What benevolence alfo, what tender love to the whole of human kind, will you drink in, together with the love of God, from the unexhaufted fource of love? And how eafy is it to conceive, that more and more of his image will be then transfufed into your foul? That from difintereffted love, all other divine tempers will, as it were naturally, fpring? Mildnefs, gentlenefs, patience, temperance, juftice, fincerity, contempt of the world; yea, whatfoever things are venerable and lovely, whatfoever are juftly of good report.

And when you thus love God and all mankind, and are transformed into his likenefs, then the commandments of God will not be grievous; you will no more complain, that they deftroy the comforts of life. So far from it, that they will be the very joy of your heart; ways of pleafantnefs, paths of peace! You will experience here that folid happinefs, which you had elfewhere fought in vain. Without fervile fear or anxious care, fo long as you continue on earth, you will gladly do the will of God here, as the angels do it in heaven. And when the time is come that you fhould depart hence, when God

fays,

ſays, "Ariſe and come away," you will paſs with joy unſpeakable out of the body, into all the fulneſs of God.

* Now does not your own heart condemn you, if you call *this* religion *enthuſiaſm?* O leave that to thoſe blind zealots, who tack together a ſett of opinions and an outſide worſhip, and call this poor, dull, lifeleſs thing, by the ſacred name of *Chriſtianity*. Well might you account *ſuch Chriſtianity* as this, a mere piece of empty pageantry, fit indeed to keep the vulgar in awe, but beneath the regard of a man of underſtanding.

But in how different a light does it now appear? If there be ſuch a religion as I have ſketched out, muſt not every reaſonable man ſee, there is nothing on earth to be deſired in compariſon of it?—But if any man deſire this, let him aſk of God: he giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not.

24. May you not aſk, quite conſiſtently with your principles, in ſome manner reſembling this;

O thou Being of beings, thou cauſe of all, thou ſeeſt my heart; thou underſtandeſt all my thoughts. But how ſmall a part of thy ways do I underſtand! I know not what is above, beneath, on every ſide. I know not my own ſoul. Only this I know, I am not what I ought to be. I ſee and approve the virtue which I have not. I do not love thee, neither am I thankful. I commend the love of mankind; but I feel it not.

not. Thou haſt ſeen hatred, malice, envy in my heart. Thou haſt ſeen anger, murmuring, diſcontent. Theſe uneaſy paſſions harrow up my ſoul. I cannot reſt, while I am under this yoke. Nor am I able to ſhake it off, I am unhappy, and that thou knoweſt.

Have compaſſion upon me, thou whoſe years do not fail! On me, who have but a ſhort time to live. I riſe up, and am cut down as a flower. I flee as it were a ſhadow. Yet a little while, and I return to duſt, and have no more place under the ſun.

Yet I know thou haſt made my ſoul to live for ever. But I know not where; and I am unwilling to try. I tremble, I am afraid to go thither, whence I ſhall not return. I ſtand quivering on the edge of the gulph; for clouds and darkneſs reſt upon it. O God! *Muſt* I go always "creeping with terrors, and plunge into eternity with a peradventure!"

O thou lover of men, is there no help in thee? I have heard (what indeed *my* heart cannot receive) that thou revealeſt thyſelf to thoſe that ſeek thee, and poureſt thy love into their hearts: and that they who know and love thee, walk through the ſhadow of death and fear no evil. O that this were ſo! That there was ſuch an unſpeakable gift, given to the children of men! For then might *I* hope for it. O God, if there be, give it unto *me!* Speak that *I* may ſee thee! Make thyſelf known unto *me* alſo in the manner

manner that thou knoweſt! In any wiſe let me know thee and love thee, that I may be formed after thy likeneſs! That I may be love, as thou art love; that I may now be happy in thee; and when thou wilt, fall into the abyſs of thy love, and enjoy thee through the ages of eternity!

A farther

A farther APPEAL

To MEN of

REASON *and* RELIGION.

PART III.

And when he came near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! Luke xix. 41, 42.

I. 1. NOW, what can an impartial perſon think concerning the preſent ſtate of *religion* in *England?* Is there a nation under the ſun which is ſo deeply fallen from the very *firſt principles* of all religion? Where is the country, in which is found ſo utter a diſregard to even *Heathen morality?* Such a thorough *contempt* of *juſtice*

juſtice and *truth*, and all that ſhould be dear and honourable to rational creatures?

What ſpecies of *vice* can poſſibly be named, even of thoſe that nature itſelf abhors, of which we have not had, for many years, a plentiful and ſtill increaſing harveſt? What *ſin* remains either in *Rome* or *Conſtantinople*, which we have not *imported* long ago (if it was not of our native growth) and *improved* upon ever ſince? Such a *complication* of villainies of every kind, conſidered with all their *aggravations*, ſuch a *ſcorn* of whatever bears the face of *virtue*, ſuch *injuſtice*, *fraud*, and *falſhood:* above all, ſuch *perjury*, and ſuch a *method of law*, we may defy the whole world to produce.

What multitudes are found throughout our land, who do not even *profeſs* any religion at all? And what numbers of thoſe who *profeſs much*, and confute their profeſſion by their *practice?* Yea, and perhaps by their exorbitant pride, vanity, covetouſneſs, rapaciouſneſs, or oppreſſion, cauſe the very *name of religion*, to ſtink in the noſtrils, of many (otherwiſe) *reaſonable* men?

2. "However, we have many thouſands ſtill, of truly, *virtuous* and *religious* men." Wherein does their *religion* conſiſt? In *righteouſneſs* and true *holineſs?* In *love* ſtronger than death? Fervent *gratitude* to God? And tender *affection* to all his creatures? Is their religion, the religion of the *heart?* A renewal of ſoul in the image of God? Do they *reſemble* him they *worſhip?* Are they

they free from pride, from vanity, from malice and envy; from ambition and avarice, from paſſion and luſt; from every uneaſy and unlovely *temper?* Alas, I fear neither they (the great part at leaſt) nor *you*, know what *this religion* means; or have any more notion of it, than the peaſant that holds the plough, of the religion of a *Gymnoſophiſt.*

'Tis well if the *genuine religion* of Chriſt has any more alliance with what you *call religion*, than with the *Turkiſh* pilgrimages to *Mecca*, or the *Popiſh* worſhip of our Lady of *Loretto.* Have not *you* ſubſtituted in the place of the *religion of the heart*, ſomething (I do not ſay equally *ſinful*, but) equally vain, and foreign to the *worſhipping* of God in *ſpirit and in truth?*——What elſe can be ſaid even of *prayer*, *(public* or *private)* in the manner wherein you generally perform it? As a thing of *courſe*, running round and round, in the ſame dull track, without either the *knowledge* or *love* of God? Without one heavenly *temper*, either attained or improved? O what mockery of God is this!

And yet even *this religion*, which can do you no good, may do you much harm. Nay, it is plain, it does: it daily increaſes your *pride*, as you meaſure your goodneſs by the *number* and *length* of your performances. It gives you a deep *contempt* of thoſe, who do not come up to the full *tale* of your virtues. It inſpires men with a *zeal*, which is the very fire of hell, furious, bitter, implacable,

placable, unmerciful; often to a degree that extinguiſhes all compaſſion, all good nature and humanity. Inſomuch, that the execrable *fierceneſs* of ſpirit, which is the natural fruit of ſuch a religion, hath many times, in ſpite of all ties, divine and human, broke out into open violence, into rapine, murder, ſedition, rebellion, civil war, to the deſolation of whole cities and countries.

Tantum hæc *Religio potuit ſuadere malorum!*

3. Now if there be a God, and one that is not a mere idle ſpectator of the things that are done upon earth, but a rewarder of men and nations according to their works, what can the event of theſe things be? It was reaſonable to believe, that he would have riſen long ago and maintained his own cauſe, either by ſending the famine or peſtilence among us, or by pouring out his fury in blood. And many wiſe and holy men have frequently declared, that they daily expected this; that they daily looked for the patience of God to give place, and judgment to rejoice over mercy.

4. Juſt at this time, when we wanted little of *filling up the meaſure of our iniquities*, two or three clergymen of the CHURCH of ENGLAND began vehemently to *call ſinners to repentance*. In two or three years they had ſounded the alarm, to the utmoſt borders of the land. Many thouſands

ſands gathered together to hear them ; and in every place where they came, many began to ſhew ſuch a *concern* for religion, as they never had done before. A ſtronger *impreſſion* was made on their minds, of the importance of things eternal, and they had more earneſt *deſires* of ſerving God, than they had ever had from their earlieſt childhood. Thus did God begin to draw them toward himſelf, with the cords of love, with the bands of a man.

Many of theſe were in a ſhort time deeply *convinced* of the *number* and *heinouſneſs* of their *ſins*. They were alſo made throughly ſenſible of thoſe *tempers*, which are juſtly hateful to God and man, and of their utter *ignorance* of God, and entire *inability*, either to know, love, or ſerve him. At the ſame time, they ſaw in the ſtrongeſt light, the *inſignificancy* of their *outſide religion:* nay, and often confeſſed it before God, as the moſt abominable *hypocriſy*. Thus did they ſink deeper and deeper into that *repentance*, which muſt ever precede *faith* in the Son of God.

And from hence ſprung *fruits meet for repentance*. The drunkard commenced ſober and temperate ; the whoremonger abſtained from adultery and fornication ; the unjuſt from oppreſſion and wrong. He that had been accuſtomed to curſe and ſwear, for many years, now ſwore no more. The ſluggard began to work with his hands, that he might eat his own bread. The miſer learned to deal his bread to the hungry,

and

and to cover the naked with a garment. Indeed the whole form of their life was changed. They had *left off doing evil and learned to do well.*

* 5. But this was not all. Over and above this *outward change*, they began to experience *inward* religion. *The love of God was ſhed abroad in their hearts*, which they continue to enjoy to this day. They love him, *becauſe he firſt loved us*, and with-held not from us his Son, his only Son. And this love conſtrains them to love all mankind, all the children of the Father of heaven and earth, and inſpires them with every holy and heavenly temper, the whole mind that was in Chriſt. Hence it is that they are now uniform in their behaviour, unblameable in all manner of converſation. And in whatſoever ſtate they are, they have learned therewith to be content: inſomuch that now they can *in every thing give thanks:* they more than patiently acquieſce, they rejoice and are exceeding glad, in all God's diſpenſations toward them. For as long as they love God (and that love no man taketh from them) they are always happy in God. Thus they calmly travel on through life, being never weary nor faint in their minds, never repining, murmuring or diſatisfied, caſting all their care upon God, till the hour comes that they ſhould drop this covering of earth, and return unto the great Father of Spirits. Then eſpecially it is, that they rejoice with joy *unſpeakable*

and

and full of glory. You who credit it not, come and ſee. See theſe living and dying Chriſtians.

" Happy while on earth they breathe
Mightier joys ordain'd to know,
Trampling on ſin, hell and death,
To the third heaven they go ?"

Now if theſe things are ſo, what reaſonable man can deny (ſuppoſing the ſcriptures to be true) that God is now viſiting this nation, in a far other manner than we had cauſe to expect? Inſtead of pouring out his fierce diſpleaſure upon us, he hath made us yet another tender of mercy : ſo that even when *ſin did* moſt *abound*, *grace* hath *much more abounded.*

6. Yea, *the grace of God which bringeth ſalvation*, preſent ſalvation from inward and outward ſin, hath abounded of late years in ſuch a *degree* as neither we nor our fathers had known. How *extenſive* is the change which has been wrought on the minds and lives of the people ! Know ye not that the ſound is gone forth into all the land ? That there is ſcarce a city or conſiderable town to be found, where ſome have not been rouſed out of the ſleep of death, and conſtrained to cry out, in the bitterneſs of their ſoul, *What muſt I do to be ſaved?* That this *religious concern* has ſpread to every age and ſex ; to moſt orders and degrees of men? To abundance of thoſe in particular, who in time paſt, were accounted monſters of

of wickedneſs, *drinking in iniquity like water*, and committing all *uncleanneſs with greedineſs*.

7. In what age has ſuch a work been wrought, conſidering the *ſwiftneſs* as well as the *extent* of it? When have ſuch *numbers* of ſinners in ſo *ſhort* a time been recovered from the error of their ways? When hath religion, I will not ſay, ſince the *reformation*, but ſince the time of *Conſtantine the Great*, made ſo large a progreſs in any nation, within ſo ſmall a ſpace? I believe, hardly can either antient or modern hiſtory, ſupply us with a parallel inſtance.

* 8. Let underſtanding men obſerve alſo the *depth* of the work, ſo *extenſively* and *ſwiftly* wrought. It is not a ſlight or ſuperficial thing: but multitudes of men have been ſo thoroughly *convinced of ſin*, that their *bones were ſmitten aſunder, as it were with a ſword dividing the very joints and marrow*. Many of theſe have been ſhortly after ſo filled with *peace and joy* in *believing*, that whether they were in the body, or out of the body, they could ſcarcely tell. And in the power of this faith they have trampled under foot, whatever the world accounts either terrible or deſirable: having evidenced in the ſevereſt trials, ſo fervent a love to God, ſo invariable and tender a good-will to mankind, particularly to their enemies, and ſuch a meaſure of all the fruits of holineſs, as were not unworthy the apoſtolic age. Now ſo deep a repentance, ſo firm a faith, ſo fervent love and unblemiſhed holineſs, wrought

in

in ſo many perſons, within ſo ſhort a time, the world has not ſeen for many ages.

9. No leſs remarkable is the *purity* of the religion which has extended itſelf ſo *deeply* and *ſwiftly*. I ſpeak particularly, with regard to the doctrines held by thoſe, among whom it is ſo extended. Thoſe of the church of *England*, at leaſt, muſt acknowledge this. For where is there a body of people in the realm, who, number for number, ſo cloſely adhere to what our church delivers as pure doctrine? Where are thoſe who have approved and do approve themſelves more *orthodox*, more ſound in their opinions? Is there a *Socinian* or *Arian* among them all? Nay, were you to recite the whole catalogue of *hereſies*, enumerated by Bp. *Pearſon*, it might be aſked, who can lay any one of theſe to their charge?

Nor is their religion more *pure* from *hereſy*, than it is from *ſuperſtition*. In former times, wherever an unuſual concern for the things of God hath appeared, on the one hand, *ſtrange and erroneous opinions* continually ſprung up with it; on the other, a *zeal* for things which were no part of religion, as though they had been eſſential branches of it. And many have laid as great (if not greater) ſtreſs on trifles, as on the weightier matters of the law. But it has not been ſo in the preſent caſe. No ſtreſs has been laid on any thing, as though it were neceſſary to ſalvation, but what is undeniably contained in the word of God. And of the things contained there-

in, the ſtreſs laid on each, has been in proportion to the nearneſs of its relation, to what is there laid down as the ſum of all, the love of God and our neighbour. So *pure* from *ſuperſtition*, ſo throughly *ſcriptural* is that religion, which has lately ſpread in this nation.

* 10. It is likewiſe *rational* as well as *ſcriptural*; it is as *pure* from *enthuſiaſm*, as from *ſuperſtition*. It is true, the contrary has been continually *affirmed*. But to *affirm* is one thing, to *prove* is another. Who will *prove*, that it is *enthuſiaſm* to *love* God? Even though we love him with all our heart? To *rejoice* in the ſenſe of his love to us? To *praiſe* him, even with all our ſtrength? Who is able, to *make good* this charge, againſt the *love of all mankind?* Or, laying rhetorical flouriſhes aſide, to come cloſe to the queſtion, and *demonſtrate*, that it is *enthuſiaſm*, in every ſtate we are in, therewith to be *content?* I do but juſt touch on the *general heads*. Ye men of reaſon, give me a man, who ſetting raillery and ill names apart, will maintain this by dint of *argument*. If not, own *this religion* is the thing you ſeek; ſober, manly, rational, divine: however expoſed to the cenſure of thoſe, who are accuſtomed to revile what they underſtand not.

11. It may be farther obſerved, the religion of thoſe we now ſpeak of, is entirely clear from *bigotry*. (Perhaps this might have been ranked with *ſuperſtition*, of which it ſeems to be only a particular

particular ſpecies.) They are in no wiſe *bigotted* to *opinions*. They do indeed hold right opinions. But they are peculiarly cautious not to reſt the weight of Chriſtianity there. They have no ſuch overgrown fondneſs for any opinions, as to think thoſe alone will make them Chriſtians, or to confine their affection or eſteem to thoſe who agree with them therein. There is nothing they are more fearful of than this, leſt it ſhould ſteal upon them unawares. Nor are they *bigotted* to any particular branch, even of practical religion. They deſire indeed to be exact in every jot and tittle, in the very ſmalleſt points of *Chriſtian practice*. But they are not attached to one point more than another: they aim at uniform, univerſal obedience. They contend for nothing *trifling*, as if it was important; for nothing *indifferent*, as if it were neceſſary; for nothing *circumſtantial*, as if it were eſſential to Chriſtianity; but for every thing in its own order.

12. Above all, let it be obſerved, that this religion has no mixture of *vice* or *unholineſs*. It gives no man of any rank or profeſſion, the leaſt licence to ſin. It makes no allowance to any perſon, for ungodlineſs of any kind. Not that all who follow after have attained this, either are already perfect. But however that be, they *plead* for no ſin, either inward or outward. They condemn every kind and degree thereof, in themſelves as well as in other men. Indeed, moſt in

 themſelves;

themſelves; it being their conſtant care, to bring thoſe words home to their own caſe, *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

* 13. Yet there is not found among them that *bitter zeal*, in points either of ſmall or of great importance, that ſpirit of *perſecution*, which has ſo often accompanied the ſpirit of reformation. 'Tis an idle conceit, that the ſpirit of perſecution is among the *Papiſts* only: it is whereſoever the devil, that old murderer, works; and he ſtill *worketh in* all *the children of diſobedience*. Of conſequence, all the children of diſobedience, will on a thouſand different pretences, and in a thouſand different ways, ſo far as God permits, perſecute the children of God. But what is ſtill more to be lamented is, that the children of God themſelves, have ſo often uſed the ſame weapons and perſecuted others, when the power was in their own hands.

Can we wholly excuſe thoſe venerable men, our great *reformers* themſelves, from this charge? I fear not, if we impartially read over any hiſtory of the *reformation*. What wonder is it then, that when the tables were turned, biſhop *Bonner* or *Gardiner* ſhould make repriſals? That they ſhould meaſure to others (indeed *good meaſure ſhaken together*) what had before been meaſured to them? Nor is it ſtrange, when we conſider the ſingle caſe of *Joan Bocher*, that God ſhould ſuffer thoſe (otherwiſe) holy men, archbiſhop

* *Cranmer*,

Cranmer, biſhop *Ridley*, and biſhop *Latimer*, to drink of the ſame cup with her.

14. But can you find any tincture of this in the caſe before us? Do not all who have lately known the love of God, know *what ſpirit they are of?* And that *the Son of man is not come to deſtroy men's lives, but to ſave them?* Do they approve of the uſing any kind or degree of *violence*, on any account or pretence whatſoever, in matters of *religion?* Do they not hold the *right* every man has to judge *for himſelf*, to be ſacred and inviolable? Do they allow any method of bringing even thoſe who are fartheſt out of the way, who are in the groſſeſt errors, to the knowledge of the truth, except the methods of reaſon and perſuaſion? Of love, patience, gentleneſs, long-ſuffering? Is there any thing in their *practice* which is inconſiſtent with this their conſtant *profeſſion?* Do they in fact hinder their own relations or dependents from worſhipping God according to their own *conſcience?* When they believe them to be in error, do they uſe *force* of any kind, in order to bring them out of it? Let the inſtances, if there are ſuch, be produced. But if no ſuch are to be found, then let all reaſonable men who believe the *bible*, own, that a work of God is wrought in our land: and ſuch a work (if we ſurvey in one view the *extent* of it, the *ſwiftneſs* with which it is ſpread, the *depth* of that religion which was ſo ſwiftly diffuſed, and its *purity* from all corrupt mixtures,)

as it muſt be acknowledged, cannot eaſily be paralleled, in all theſe concurrent circumſtances, by any thing that is found in the *Engliſh* annals, ſince Chriſtianity was firſt planted in this iſland.

II. 1. And yet thoſe *who can diſcern the face of the ſky, cannot diſcern the ſigns of the times.* Yet thoſe who are eſteemed wiſe men do not know, that God is now reviving his work upon earth. Indeed concerning ſome of theſe the reaſon is plain; they *know* not, becauſe they *think* not of it. Their thoughts are otherwiſe employed; their minds are taken up with things of quite a different nature. Or perhaps, they may think of it a *little* now and then, when they have nothing elſe to do; but not ſeriouſly, or deeply; not with any cloſeneſs or attention of thought. They are too much in haſte to *weigh* the facts whereof we ſpeak, and to draw the juſt inference therefrom: nor is the conviction which they may ſometimes feel, ſuffered to ſink into their hearts: but things that have a larger ſhare in their affections ſoon deſtroy the very traces of it.

2. True it is, that there are ſome who think more deeply, who are accuſtomed to conſider things from the foundation, and to lay circumſtances together, that they may judge of nothing before they have full evidence: and yet even ſome of theſe appear to be *in doubt*, concerning the preſent work. Now, ſuppoſing it to be a work of God, how can this be accounted for? That

That they who ſo diligently inquire concerning it, do not know the time of their viſitation? Perhaps, becauſe of the deeply rooted *prejudice* which they brought with them to the enquiry; and, which ſtill hanging on their minds, makes it ſcarce poſſible for them to form an impartial judgment. Perhaps, even a ſlight *prepoſſeſſion* might occaſion their ſtumbling on ſome of thoſe rocks of *offence*, which by the wiſe permiſſion of God, always did and always will attend any revival of his work. Nay, it may be, their very caution was carried to exceſs. They would not judge before they had ſuch evidence as the nature of the thing would *not* admit, or at leaſt, God did not ſee fit to give.

3. All this is very eaſy to conceive. But it may at firſt appear ſurpriſing, to find men of renown, men ſuppoſed to be endowed with knowledge, and with abilities of every kind, flatly, openly, peremptorily *denying*, that there has been any *unuſual* work of God at all! Yea, a late eminent writer goes farther yet, accounts it an inſtance of downright *Enthuſiaſm*, to *imagine*, that there is any *extraordinary* work now wrought upon the earth.†

It avails not to ſay, "no, he does not deny this, but he denies it to be the work of God". This is palpably trifling: for the work under conſideration, is of ſuch a nature (namely, the converſion of men from all manner of ſins, to

† *Obſervations*, part III.

holineſs of heart and life) that if it be at any time wrought at all, it muſt be the work of God: ſeeing it is God alone and not any child of man, who is able *deſtroy the works of the devil.*

* Yet neither is this difficult to be accounted for, if we conſider things more cloſely: for the ſame *prejudice* which keeps ſome *in doubt*, may eaſily be conceived ſo to influence others, as to make them wholly *deny* the work of God. And this it may do in ſeveral ways: it may either bring them to queſtion the facts related, and hinder their endeavouring to be more fully informed; or prevent their drawing ſuch inferences from thoſe facts, as they would otherwiſe ſee to be plain and undeniable. Yea, and it will give tenfold weight to the *offences* which muſt come, ſo as to over-ballance all evidence whatſoever.

4. This alſo may account for the behaviour of thoſe, who not content to ſuſpend their judgment, or to *deny* the work of God, go farther ſtill, even to the length of *contradicting* and *blaſpheming*. Nay, ſome of theſe have expreſſed a deeper abhorrence, and ſhewn a ſtronger enmity againſt this, than they were ever known to do againſt popery, infidelity, or any hereſy whatſoever. Some have *perſecuted* the *inſtruments* whom it pleaſed God to uſe herein, only *not to the death*: and others have treated in the ſame manner, all thoſe whom they termed their *followers*. A few inſtances of this it may be proper

proper to mention, out of very many which might be recited.

5. On the 20th of *June*, 1743, a great multitude of people gathered together, chiefly from *Walſal*, *Darlaſton* and *Dilſton*, in *Wenſbury* church yard, *Staffordſhire*. They went from thence (when, by founding a horn they had gathered their whole company together) to Mr. *Eaton's* houſe, in the middle of the town, who was at that time *conſtable*. He went to the door with his conſtable's ſtaff, and began reading the act of parliament againſt riots; but the ſtones flew ſo thick about his head, that he was forced to leave off reading and retire. They broke all his windows, the door of his houſe, and a large clock in pieces. They went then to above fourſcore houſes, in many of which there were not three panes of glaſs left.

6. On *June* 20, 1743, *John Baker*, at the head of a large mob came to the houſe of *Jonas Turner*, at *Weſt-Bramwick* near *Wenſbury*, and aſked him, "Whether he would *keep from theſe men* that went preaching about, and go to the church?" he anſwered, "I do *go to the church*. But I never ſee any of you there," preſently one *Dan. Oniens* with a great club, broke great part of the window at one blow. Others laid hold of him, and dragged him about ſixty yards, before he could get looſe from them. Afterwards they broke all his windows, and threw into

the houſe abundance of ſtones, to break his goods.

About four in the afternoon they came to the houſe of widow *Turner* of *Weſt-Bramwick*. They threw in bricks and ſtones ſo faſt, that ſhe was forced to open the door and run out among them. One of her daughters cried out, "My mother will be killed!" On which they fell to throwing ſtones at her. She ran into a neighbour's houſe, but before ſhe could ſhut the door, they broke the bottom off with a brick end. They followed her other daughter with ſtones, and one with a great ſtake. She ran into another houſe, much frightened, expecting to be murdered. The widow aſked "How can you come and abuſe us thus?" On which one came with a large club, and ſwore, "If ſhe ſpoke another word, he would knock her on the head, and bury her in the ditch." Then he went and broke all the glaſs that was left. The ſame they did to many of the neighbouring houſes.

7. On the 19th of *June*, *James Yeoman* of *Walſal*, ſaw *Mary Bird* in her father's houſe at *Wenſbury*, and ſwore, "By G— you are there now; but we will kill you to-morrow." Accordingly he came with a mob the next day; and after they had broken all the windows, he took up a ſtone, and ſaid, "Now by G— I will kill *you*." He threw it, and ſtruck her on the ſide of the head. The blood guſhed out, and ſhe dropt down immediately.

"Another

" Another of them took Mr. *Hands* of *Wenſbury* by the throat, ſwore he would be the death of him, gave him a great ſwing round, and threw him upon the ground. As ſoon as he roſe, one *Equal Baker* gave him a blow on the eye, and knocked him down again, in about half an hour the mob came to his houſe, and broke all the windows, except about twenty panes. The kitchen windows they cleared, lead, bars and all, broke the window-poſts, and threw them into the houſe. The ſhop was ſhut up (he being an apothecary :) but they quickly broke all the pots and bottles in pieces, and deſtroyed all his medicines. They broke alſo the ſhelves and drawers in the ſhop to pieces, and many of his houſhold goods.

8. On *January* 13, 1743-4, the mob roſe again at *Darlaſton*, broke all the windows of all who *followed this way* (except two or three who bought themſelves off) broke open ſeveral houſes, and took what they liked, the people belonging to them being fled for their lives.

About the ſame time the Rev. Mr. *E*— came to *Darlaſton*; and meeting ſome others at *Thomas Forſhew*'s they drew up a writing, and *Nicholas Winſpur*, the crier of the town, gave public notice, " That all the people of the ſociety muſt come to Mr. *Forſhew*'s, and ſign it; or elſe their houſes would be pulled down immediately." It was to this effect, " That they would never read,

or ſing, or pray together, or hear theſe parſons any more."

Several ſigned this through fear. They made every one who did, lay down a penny——"To MAKE THE MOB DRINK."

9. About *Candlemas*, the wife of *Joſhua Conſtable*, of *Darlaſton*, was going to *Wenſbury*, when a mob met her in the road, threw her down ſeveral times, and abuſed her in a manner too horrible to write. A warrant was procured for ſome of theſe. But one of them only was carried before Mr. *G*——, who came back and told his companions, the juſtice ſaid, "That they might go home about their buſineſs." On this the mob roſe again, came to *Joſhua*'s houſe, and deſtroyed all the neceſſary goods therein. They likewiſe broke and ſpoiled all his ſhop tools, threw the tiles off the roof of the houſe, and pulled down one room, the joiſt of which they carried away with them. All his gunlocks they took away; they tore in pieces all his wife's linen, cut the bed and bedſtead, ſo that it was good for nothing, and tore her bible and common-prayer book all to pieces. She and her huſband retired to another houſe. But one telling the mob they were there, they ſwore "they would tear it down immediately, if the man let them ſtay any longer." So they went out in the froſt and ſnow, not knowing where to lay their head.

10. On *Tueſday*, *Jan.* 31, 1743-4, *Henry Old* came to *John Griffiths*'s houſe, ſaying, "If he

he did not leave *following this way*, he had a hundred men at his command, who ſhould come and pull his houſe down." Soon after he brought ſome with him; but the neighbours gave him money, and ſent him away for that time.

Monday, *February* 6, between ſeven and eight at night, came part of the ſame company. Hearing them afar off, *John* and his wife faſtened the door, and left the houſe. Some of the neighbours going in ſoon after, found them deſtroying all they could. Two chairs and ſeveral bundles of linen were laid upon the fire. After they had deſtroyed what they could, they loaded themſelves with cloaths and meat, and went their way.

The ſame day public notice was given at *Walſal*, by a paper fixt up there, " That all who deſigned to aſſiſt in breaking the windows, and plundering the houſes of the *Methodiſts* at *Wenſbury*, ſhould be ready at ten o'clock, the next morning, on the *Church-hill*."

11. The next morning, *Feb.* 7, (being *Shrove-Tueſday*,) about half an hour after ten, great numbers of men were gathered together on the *Church-hill*. Thence they marched down, ſome armed with ſwords, ſome with clubs, and ſome with axes. They firſt fell upon *Benjamin Watſon*'s houſe, and broke many of the tiles, and all the windows. Next they came to Mr. *Addinbrook's*, broke a fine clock, with many of his goods, and ſtole all the things they could carry away. The next houſe

was

was *Jane Smith*'s, whoſe windows they broke, with what little goods ſhe had. The next was Mr. *Bird*'s, where they deſtroyed every thing they found, except what they carried away; cutting the beds in pieces, as they did all the beds which they could any were find. Thence they went to Mr. *Edge*'s houſe; he was ill of a fever; ſo, for a ſum of money, they paſt it over. The next houſe was Mr. *Hand*'s. They broke all his counters, boxes and drawers, and all (except ſome bedſteads) that axe or hammer could break. They ſpilt all his drugs and chymical medicines, and ſtole every thing they could carry, even all his and his wife's wearing apparel, beſide what they had on.

12. Mr. *Eaton's* houſe was next. They broke all his windows, and all his inſide doors in pieces, cut the lead off his houſe, deſtroyed or ſtole whatever they could lay their hands on. Some gentlemen offered to ſtop them, if he would ſign a paper implying, "That he would never hear thoſe parſons more." But he told them, "He had felt already what a wounded conſcience was; and by the grace of God he would wound his conſcience no more."

After they had done at Mr. *Eaton*'s, they plundered ſeveral other houſes in *Wenſbury* and *Weſt Bramwick*. It is ſcarce poſſible to deſcribe the outrages they committed. Only they left them they plundered alive.

While

While they were plundering *John Turner's* houſe, he waded thro' the brook, to try if he could ſave ſome of his goods, which one *David Garington* was carrying away. Upon which *Garington* told him, " It would be the ſame here as it was in *Ireland*, for there would be a *maſſacre* very quickly. And he wiſhed it was *now*."

13. About eleven o'clock, *Sarah*, the wife of *John Sheldon*, being told the mob was coming to her houſe, went and met them at the gate. She aſked *John Baker*, their captain, " What they were come for?" He anſwered, " If ſhe would have nothing to do with *theſe people*, not a penny worth of her goods ſhould be hurt." She made no reply. Then they broke the door open, and began breaking and plundering the goods. On coming out with a fire ſhovel, ſhe begged him, " not to take it away." He ſwore if ſhe ſpoke another word, he would beat her brains out."

John Sheldon was this while helping *Thomas Parkes* to hide his goods, though he knew by the noiſe they were breaking his own to pieces. Between two and three he came to his houſe with *William Sitch*. *William* aſked *Sarah*, how ſhe did? Saying, " For his part, he took joyfully the ſpoiling of his goods." She anſwered, that, " ſeeing ſo much wickedneſs, ſhe could not rejoice; but ſhe bleſſed God ſhe could bear it patiently, and found not the leaſt anger in her." *John Sheldon* ſeeing the ſpoil they had made,

made, ſmiled and ſaid, " Here is ſtrange work." His wife told him, " if ſhe had complied with their terms, not one penny-worth would have been hurt." He replied, " That if ſhe had complied to deny the truth, and he had found his goods whole on that account, he ſhould never have been eaſy as long as he lived; but he bleſſed God that ſhe had rather choſen to ſuffer wrong."

I believe every reaſonable man will allow, that nothing can poſſibly excuſe theſe proceedings: ſeeing they are open, bare-faced violations both of juſtice and mercy, and of all laws divine and human.

III. I ſuppoſe no *Proteſtant* will undertake to defend ſuch proceedings, even toward the vileſt miſcreants. But abundance of *excuſes* have been made, if not for *oppoſing* it thus, yet for *denying* this work to be of God, and for not acknowledging the time of our viſitation.

Some alledge, that the *doctrines* of theſe men are *falſe*, *erroneous* and *enthuſiaſtick*: that they are *new*, and unheard of till of late: that they are Quakeriſm, Fanaticiſm, Popery.

This whole pretence has been already cut up by the roots! It having been ſhewn at large, that every branch of this doctrine, is the plain doctrine of ſcripture, interpreted by our own church. Therefore it cannot be either *falſe* or *erroneous*, provided the ſcripture be true. Neither can it

be

be *enthuſiaſtick*, unleſs the ſame epithet belongs to our articles, homilies and liturgy. Nor yet can theſe doctrines be termed *new*, no newer, at leaſt, then the reign of queen *Elizabeth*; not even with regard to the *way* of *expreſſion*, or the manner wherein they are propoſed. And as to the ſubſtance, they are more antient ſtill; as antient not only as the goſpel, as the times of *Iſaiah*, or *David*, or *Moſes*, but as the firſt revelation of God to man. If therefore they were *unheard* of till of late, in any that is termed a Chriſtian country, the greater guilt is on thoſe, who as ambaſſadors of Chriſt, ought to publiſh them day by day

Fanaticiſm, if it means any thing at all, means the ſame with *Enthuſiaſm*, or religious madneſs, from which (as was obſerved before) *theſe doctrines* are diſtant as far as the eaſt from the weſt. However, it is a *convenient* word to be thrown out, upon any thing we do not like; becauſe ſcarce one reader in a thouſand, has any idea of what is means. If any part of this doctrine is held by the *Quakers*, there is the more reaſon to rejoice. I would to God they held it all: though the doctrine itſelf, would be neither better nor worſe for this.

Popery in the mouth of many men means juſt nothing: or at moſt, "Something very horrid and bad." But *Popery*, properly ſpeaking, is *The diſtinguiſhing doctrines* of the church of *Rome*. They are ſummed up in the *twelve articles* which the

the council of *Trent* added to the *Nicene* creed. Now who can find the leaſt connexion between any of theſe, and the doctrines whereof we are ſpeaking?

2. Others alledge, "Their doctrine is too ſtrict. They make the way to heaven too narrow." And this is in truth the original objection, (as it was almoſt the only one for ſome time) and is ſecretly at the bottom of a thouſand more, which appear in various forms. But do they make the way to heaven any narrower, than our Lord and his apoſtles made it? Is their doctrine ſtricter than that of the bible? Conſider only a few plain texts. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength.*—*For every idle word which men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account in the day of judgment.*——*Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* If their doctrine is ſtricter than this, they are to blame. But you know in your conſcience, it is not. And who can be one jot leſs ſtrict, without *corrupting the word of God?* Can any ſteward of the myſteries of God be found faithful, if he change any part of that ſacred depoſitum? No. He can abate nothing, he can ſoften nothing. He is conſtrained to declare to all men, "I may not *bring down* the ſcripture to your taſte. You muſt *come up* to it, or periſh for ever."

3. This

3. This is the real ground of that other popular cry, concerning "the uncharitableneſs of theſe men." Uncharitable are they? In what reſpect? Do they not feed the hungry and clothe the naked? No, that is not the thing. They are not wanting in this. But they are ſo *uncharitable* in judging! They think none can be ſaved, but thoſe of their own way. They damn all the world beſide themſelves.

* What do you mean? "They think none can be ſaved, but thoſe of their own way." Moſt ſurely they do. For as there is but *one heaven*, ſo there is but *one way* to it; even the way of *faith* in Chriſt, (for we ſpeak not of *opinions*, or outward *modes* of *worſhip*) the way of *love* to God and man, *the highway of holineſs*. And is it uncharitable, to think or ſay, That none can be ſaved, but thoſe who walk in this way? Was he then uncharitable, who declared, *He that believeth not ſhall be damned?* Or he that ſaid, *Follow holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord?* And again; Though *I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned*, yet, *if I have not* (αγαπην) *charity, love*, all this profiteth me nothing."

"But they damn all, you ſay, beſide themſelves." *Damn* all! What kind of word is this? They damn no man. None is able to damn any man, but the Lord and judge of all. What you probably mean by that ſtrange expreſſion is, they declare that God condemns all, beſide thoſe who

who believe in Jesus Christ, and love him and keep his commandments. And so must *you* also, or you sin against God, and your neighbour, and your own soul. But is there any *uncharitableness* in this? In warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come? On the contrary, not to warn a poor, blind, stupid wretch, that he is hanging over the mouth of hell, would be so inexcusable a want of charity, as would bring his blood upon our own head.

4. But there is no room for dispute, touching these *doctrines* in general, seeing our Lord gives you so plain a rule, by which you may easily and infallibly know, whether they be of God. *The tree is known by its fruit, either therefore make the tree good, and its fruit good; or else, make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt.* (Matt. xii. 33.) Now what fruit does the tree before us bring forth? Look and see; believe your own eyes and ears. Sinners leave their sins. The servants of the devil become the servants of God. Is this good or evil fruit? That *vice* loses ground, and *virtue*, practical *religion*, gains? O dispute no more. Know the tree by its fruit. Bow and own the finger of God.

But many, who own *these doctrines* to be of God, yet cannot be reconciled to the *instruments* he hath made use of. A very common exception taken against these is (and was from the beginning) "That they are so *young*." Therefore (abundance

(abundance of men have readily inferred) " This work cannot be of God."

Perhaps they are not so young as you conceive. Mr. *Whitefield* is now upwards of thirty; my brother is thirty-seven years of age. I have lived above forty-two years. And a gentleman in *Cornwall*, for whom I often preach, has the merit of having lived threescore and seventeen years.

But, supposing the antecedent true, what a consequence is this? What shadow of scripture have you to support it? Doth not God *send by whom he will send?* And who shall say to him, *What dost thou?* " These are too young; send elder men." What shadow of reason? Is it not possible, that a person of thirty or forty may have as true a judgment in the things of God, and as great a blessing attending his preaching, as one of fifty or fourscore?

I wish you would explain yourself a little on this head:

Scire velim, verbo, *pretium quotus arroget annus?*

How old do you require a man to be, before God should have leave to speak by his mouth?—— O my brethren, who could have believed any serious man would once have named such an argument as this? Seeing both scripture and reason teach, that God herein *giveth account to none of his ways*. But he worketh by whomsoever he

he *will* work; he ſheweth mercy by whom he *will* ſhew mercy.

* 6. " But there are only *a few* young heads," I cannot but obſerve here, what great pains have been taken, what diligence ſhewn, to make and to keep them *few*. What arts have not been uſed, to keep back thoſe of the clergy in particular, who have been clearly convinced from time to time, that they ought to join hearts and hands in the work? On this occaſion, it has been accounted meritorious, to *ſay all manner of evil of us falſely*: to *promiſe* them whatever their hearts deſired, if they would refrain from theſe men: and, on the other hand, to *threaten* them with heavy things, if ever they went among them more. So that how fully ſoever they were convinced, they could not act according to their conviction, unleſs they could give up at once all thought of *preferment*, either in church or ſtate; nay, all hope of even a *fellowſhip*, or poor *ſcholarſhip*, in either univerſity. Many alſo have been threatened, that if they went on in this way, what little they had ſhould be taken from them. And many have, on this very account, been diſowned by their deareſt friends and neareſt relations. So that there was no poſſibility the number of theſe labourers ſhould ever be increaſed at all, unleſs by thoſe who could break through all theſe ties, who deſired nothing in the preſent world, who counted neither their fortunes, nor friends, nor lives, dear unto themſelves, ſo they might

might only *keep a conſcience void* of offence toward God and toward men.

7. But what do you infer from their *fewneſs?* That becauſe they are *few*, therefore God cannot *work by them?* Upon what ſcripture do you ground this? I thought it was *the ſame to him, to ſave by many or few.* Upon what reaſon? Why cannot God ſave ten thouſand ſouls by one man, as well as by ten thouſand? How little, how inconſiderable a circumſtance is number before God? Nay, is there not reaſon to believe, that whenſoever God is pleaſed to work a great deliverance, ſpiritual or temporal, he may firſt ſay, as of old, *The people are too many for me to give the* Midianites *into their hands?* May he not purpoſely chuſe *few* as well as inconſiderable inſtruments, for the greater manifeſtation of his own glory? Very *few*, I grant, are the inſtruments now employed: yet a great work is wrought already. And the fewer they are by whom this large harveſt hath hitherto been gathered in, the more evident muſt it appear to unprejudiced minds, that the work is not of man, but of God.

8. "But they are not only few, but *unlearned* alſo." This is a grievous offence; and is by many eſteemed a ſufficient *excuſe*, for not acknowledging the work to be of God.

The ground of this offence is partly true. Some of thoſe who now preach are *unlearned.* They neither underſtand the antient languages, nor

nor any of the branches of philoſophy. And yet this objection might have been ſpared, by many of thoſe who have frequently made it: becauſe *they* are *unlearned* too (though accounted otherwiſe.) They have not themſelves the very thing they require in others.

* Men in general are under a great miſtake with regard to what is called "The Learned World." They do not know, they cannot eaſily imagine, how little *learning* there is among them. I do not ſpeak of *abſtruſe learning*; but of what all divines, at leaſt of any note, are ſuppoſed to have, viz. The knowledge of the *tongues*, at leaſt *Latin*, *Greek* and *Hebrew*, and of the common *arts* and *ſciences*.

* How few men of learning, ſo called, underſtand *Hebrew?* Even ſo far as to read a plain chapter in *Geneſis?* Nay, how few underſtand *Greek?* Make an eaſy experiment. Deſire that grave man, who is urging this objection, only to tell you the *Engliſh* of the firſt paragraph that occurs in one of *Plato's dialogues?* I am afraid we may go farther ſtill. How few underſtand *Latin?* Give one of them an *epiſtle* of *Tully*, and ſee how readily he will explain it, without his *dictionary*. If he can hobble through that, it is odds but a *georgick* in *Virgil*, or a *ſatire* of *Perſius* ſets him faſt.

* And with regard to the *arts* and *ſciences:* How few underſtand ſo much as the general principles

ciples of *Logick?* Can one in ten of the clergy (O grief of heart!) or of the *maſters* of *arts* in either univerſity, when an argument is brought, tell you even the *mood* and *figure* wherein it is propoſed? Or *compleat* an *Enthymeme?* Perhaps, you do not ſo much as underſtand the term: ſupply the *premiſs* which is wanting, in order to make it a full *categorical ſyllogiſm*. Can one in ten of them demonſtrate a *problem* or *theorem* in *Euclid's Elements?* Or define the common terms uſed in *metaphyſicks?* Or intelligibly explain the firſt principles of it? Why then will they *pretend* to that learning, which they are conſcious to themſelves they have not? Nay, and cenſure others who have it not, and do not *pretend* to it? Where are ſincerity and candour fled?

* It will eaſily be obſerved, that I do not depreciate *learning* of any kind. The knowledge of the *languages* is a valuable talent; ſo is the knowledge of the *arts* and *ſciences*. Both the one and the other may be employed to the glory of God, and the good of men. But yet I aſk, Where hath God declared in his word, that he *cannot*, or *will not* make uſe of men that have it not? Has *Moſes*, or any of the prophets affirmed this? Or our Lord? Or any of his apoſtles? You are ſenſible all theſe are againſt you. You know the apoſtles themſelves, all except St. *Paul*, were ανθρωποι αγραμματοι και ιδιωται common, unphiloſophical, unlettered men.

9. "What! Then you make yourselves, *like the apostles.*" Because this silly objection has so often been urged, I will for once spend a few words upon it, though it does not deserve that honour. Why, must not every man, whether clergyman, or layman, be in some respects *like the apostles*, or go to hell? Can any man be saved, if he be not holy, *like the apostles?* A follower of them, as they were of Christ? And ought not every preacher of the gospel, to be in a *peculiar* manner *like the apostles*, both in holy tempers, in exemplariness of life, and in his indefatigable labours for the good of souls? Woe unto every ambassador of Christ, who is not *like the apostles* in this! In holiness; in making full proof of his ministry; in spending and being spent for Christ! We *cannot* and therefore we *need* not be like them, in *working outward miracles.* But we may and ought, in *working together with God* for the salvation of men. And the same God who was always ready to help *their* infirmities, is ready to help *ours* also. He who made them *workmen that needed not to be ashamed*, will teach us also *rightly to divide the word of truth.* In this respect likewise, in respect of his *having help from God*, for the work whereunto he is called, every preacher of the gospel is *like the apostles.* Otherwise he is of all men most miserable.

* 10. And I am bold to affirm, that these unlettered men, *have help from God* for that great work,

work, the saving souls from death; seeing he hath enabled, and doth enable them still, to *turn many to righteousness*. Thus hath he *destroyed the wisdom of the wise, and brought to nought the understanding of the prudent*. When they imagined they had effectually shut the door, and locked up every passage, whereby any help could come to two or three preachers, weak in body as well as soul; who they might reasonably believe would humanly speaking, wear themselves out in a short time: when they had gained their point by securing (as they supposed) all the men of learning in the nation; *he that sitteth in heaven laughed them to scorn*, and came upon them by a way they thought not of. *Out of the stones he raised up* those who should beget children to *Abraham*. We had no more foresight of this than you. Nay, we had the deepest prejudices against it: until we could not but own, that God gave *wisdom from above* to these unlearned and ignorant men; so that the work of the Lord prospered in their hand, and sinners were daily converted to God.

Indeed in the one thing which they profess to know, they are not *ignorant* men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go thro' such an examination, in substantial, practical, experimental divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the university (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love) are able to do. But oh! what manner of *examination*,

do moſt of *thoſe candidates* go through? And what proof are the *teſtimonials* commonly brought (as ſolemn as the *form* is wherein they run) either of their *piety* or *knowledge*, to whom are intruſted thoſe ſheep, which God hath purchaſed with his own blood!

11. "But they are *laymen*. You ſeem to be ſenſible yourſelf, of the ſtrength of this objection. For as many as you have anſwered, I obſerve you have never once ſo much as touched on this."

I have not. Yet it was not diſtruſt of my cauſe, but tenderneſs to you which occaſioned my ſilence. I had ſomething to advance on this head alſo: but I was afraid you could not bear it. I was conſcious to myſelf, that ſome years ſince, to touch this point, was to touch the apple of my eye. And this makes me almoſt unwilling to ſpeak now; leſt I ſhould *ſhock* the prejudices I cannot *remove*.

* Suffer me, however, juſt to intimate to you ſome things, which I would leave to your farther conſideration. The *ſcribes* of old, who were the ordinary *preachers* among the *Jews*, were not *prieſts*; they were not better than *laymen*. Yea, many of them were incapable of the prieſthood, being of the tribe of *Simeon*, not of *Levi*.

Hence probably it was, that the *Jews* themſelves never urged it as an objection to our Lord's preaching (even thoſe who did not acknowledge or believe, that he was ſent of God in an *extra-*

ordinary

ordinary character) that he was no *prieſt* after the order of *Aron*. Nor indeed could he; ſeeing he was of the tribe of *Judah*.

Nor does it appear, that any objected this to the apoſtles. So far from it, that at *Antioch* in *Piſidia*, we find *the rulers of the ſynagogue ſending unto Paul and* Barnabas, ſtrangers juſt come into the city, *ſaying, men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, ſay on*, Acts xiii. 15.

If we conſider theſe things, we ſhall be the leſs ſurprized at what occurs in the 8th chapter of the *Acts: At that time there was a great perſecution againſt the church, and they where all ſcattered abroad:* (i. e. all the *church*, all the believers in Jeſus) *throughout the regions of* Judea *and* Samaria. (v. 1.) *therefore they that were ſcattered abroad, went every where preaching the word*, (v. 4.) Now, what ſhadow of reaſon have we to ſay, or think, that all theſe were *ordained* before they *preached?*

12. * If we come to later times; was Mr. *Calvin* ordained? Was he either prieſt or deacon? And were not moſt of thoſe whom it pleaſed God to employ in promoting the *reformation* abroad, *laymen* alſo? Could that great work have been promoted at all in many places, if *laymen* had not preached? And yet how ſeldom do the very *Papiſts* urge this, as an objection againſt the *reformation?* Nay, as rigorous as they are in things of this kind, they themſelves appoint,

even in ſome of their ſtricteſt *orders*, that " if any *lay-brother* believes himſelf called of God, to *preach* as a *miſſionary*, the ſuperior of the *order*, being informed thereof, ſhall immediately ſend him away."

*In all *proteſtant* churches it is ſtill more evident, that *ordination* is not held a neceſſary *prerequiſite* of preaching: for in *Sweden*, in *Germany*, in *Holland*, and, I believe, in every *reformed* church in *Europe*, it is not only *permitted* but *required*, that before any one is *ordained*, (before he is admitted even into *deacon*'s orders, wherever the diſtinction between prieſts and deacons is retained) he ſhould publickly preach a year or more *ad probandum facultatem*. And for this practice, they believe they have the authority of an expreſs command of God: *Let theſe firſt be* proved: *then let them uſe the office of a* deacon, *being found blameleſs*, 1 Tim. iii. 10.

23. " In *England*, however, there is nothing of this kind; no *layman* permitted to ſpeak in public." No! Can you be ignorant, that in an hundred *churches* they do it continually? In how many (particularly in the *Weſt* of *England*) does the *pariſh-clerk* read one of the leſſons? (In ſome he reads the whole ſervice of the church, perhaps, every Lord's day) and do not other *laymen* conſtantly do the ſame thing, yea, in our very *cathedrals*? Which being under the more immediate inſpection of the *biſhops*, ſhould be patterns to all other churches.

Perhaps

Perhaps it will be said, "But this is not *preaching*." Yes, but it is, eſſentially ſuch. For what is it to *preach*, but *prædicare verbum Dei*? To publiſh the word of God? And this *laymen* do all over *England*; particularly under the eye of every biſhop in the nation.

Nay, is it not done in the univerſities themſelves? Who *ordained* that ſinging-man at *Chriſt-church*? Who is likewiſe utterly unqualified for the work, murdering every leſſon he reads? Not even endeavouring to read it as the word of God but rather as an old ſong? *Such* a *layman* as this, meddling at all with the word of God, I grant is a ſcandal to the *Engliſh* nation.

*To go a ſtep farther.——Do not the fundamental conſtitutions of the *univerſity* of *Oxford*, the *ſtatutes*, even as reviſed by archbiſhop *Laud*, require every *batchelor of arts*, nine in ten of whom are *laymen*, to read three *public lectures* in moral philoſophy, on whatever ſubject he chuſes? My ſubject, I well remember, was, The LOVE of God. Now, what was this but *preaching*?

*Nay, may not a man be a *doctor of divinity* even in *Oxford*, tho' he never was *ordained* at all? The inſtance of Dr. *Atwell*, (late) rector of *Exeter college*, is freſh in every one's memory.

Theſe are a few of the conſiderations that may readily occur to any thinking man on this head. But I do not reſt the cauſe on theſe. I believe it may be defended a ſhorter way.

14. * It pleaſed God by two or three miniſters of the church of *England*, to call many ſinners to repentance: who, in ſeveral parts, were undeniably turned from a courſe of ſin, to a courſe holineſs.

The miniſters of the places where this was done, ought to have received thoſe miniſters with open arms: and to have taken them who had juſt begun to ſerve God, into their peculiar care; watching over them in tender love, leſt they ſhould fall back into the ſnare of the devil.

Inſtead of this, the greater part ſpoke of thoſe miniſters, as if the devil, not God had ſent them. Some repelled them from the Lord's table: others ſtirred up the people againſt them, repreſenting them even in their public diſcourſes, as *fellows not fit to live*; *papiſts*, *hereticks*, *traitors*; *conſpirators* againſt their king and *country*.

And how did they watch over the ſinners lately reformed? Even as a leopard watcheth over his prey. They drove ſome of them alſo from the Lord's table; to which till *now* they had no deſire to approach. They preached all manner of evil concerning them, openly curſing them in the name of the Lord. They turned many out of their work; perſuaded others to do ſo too, and harraſſed them all manner of ways.

The event was, that ſome were wearied out, and ſo turned back to their vomit again. And then theſe good paſtors gloried over them, and endeavoured

endeavoured to ſhake others by their example.

15. * When the miniſters by whom God had helped them before, came again to thoſe places, great part of their work was to begin again; if it could be begun again; but the relapſers were often ſo hardened in ſin, that no impreſſion could be made upon them.

What could they do in a caſe of ſo extreme neceſſity? Where ſo many ſouls lay at ſtake?

No clergyman would aſſiſt at all. The expedient that remained was, to find ſome one among themſelves, who was upright of heart, and of ſound judgment in the things of God: and to deſire him to meet the reſt as often as he could, in order to confirm them, as he was able, in the ways of God, either by reading to them, or by prayer, or by exhortation.

God immediately gave a bleſſing hereto. In ſeveral places, by means of theſe plain men, not only thoſe who had already begun to run well, were hindered from drawing back to perdition; but other ſinners alſo, from time to time were converted from the error of their ways.

This plain account of the whole proceeding, I take to be the beſt defence of it. I know no ſcripture which forbids making uſe of ſuch help, in a caſe of ſuch neceſſity. And I praiſe God who has given even *this* help to thoſe poor ſheep, when *their own ſhepherds pitied them not.*

"But does not the ſcripture ſay, *no man taketh* this honour *to himſelf, but he that is called of God, as was* Aaron?" Nor do theſe. The *honour* here mentioned is the *prieſthood.* But they no more take upon them to be prieſts then to be kings. They take not upon them to adminiſter the ſacraments, an honour peculiar to the prieſts of God. Only according to their power, they exhort their brethren, to continue in the grace of God.

"But for theſe *laymen* to exhort at all, is a violation of all *order.*"

What is this *order* of which you ſpeak? Will it ſerve inſtead of the knowledge and love of God? Will this *order* reſcue thoſe from the ſnare of the devil, who are now taken captive at his will? Will it keep them who are eſcaped a little way, from turning back into *Egypt?* If not, how ſhould I anſwer it to God, if rather than violate I know not what *order*, I ſhould *ſacrifice* thouſands of ſouls thereto? I dare not do it. It is at the peril of my own ſoul.

Indeed if by *order* were meant, *true Chriſtian diſcipline*, whereby all the living members of Chriſt are knit together in one, and all that are putrid and dead, immediately cut off from the body: this *order* I reverence; for it is of God. But where is it to be found? In what dioceſe? In what town or pariſh, within *England* or *Wales?* Are you rector of a pariſh? Then let us go no farther. Does this *order* obtain there? Nothing leſs.

Your

Your parishioners are a rope of sand. As few (if any) of them are alive to God; so they have no connection with each other, unless such as might be among *Turks* or *Heathens*. Neither have *you* any power to cut off from that body, were it alive, the dead and putrid members. Perhaps you have no desire: but all are jumbled together without any care or concern of yours.

It is plain then, what *order* is to be found is not among *you*, who so loudly contend for it, but among that very people whom you continually blame, for their *violation* and *contempt* of it. The little flock you condemn is united together in one body, by one spirit: so that *if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, if one be honoured, all rejoice with it.* Nor does any dead member long remain; but as soon as the hope of recovering it is past, it is cut off.

Now suppose we were willing to relinquish our charge, and to give up this flock into *your* hands; would *you* observe the same *order*, as we do now, with them and the other souls under your care? You *dare* not: because you have respect of persons. You fear the faces of men. You *cannot*; because you have not *overcome the world*. You are not above the desire of earthly things. And it is impossible you should ever have any *true order*, or exercise any *Christian discipline*, till you are wholly *crucified to the world*, till you desire nothing more but God.

Conſider this matter, I intreat you, a little farther. Here are thirty thouſand perſons (perhaps ſomewhat more) of whom I take care, watching over their ſouls as he that muſt give account, in order hereto it lies upon me (ſo I judge) at the peril of my own ſalvation, to know not only their names, but their outward and inward ſtates, their difficulties and dangers. Otherwiſe how can I know either how to guide them aright, or to commend them to God in prayer? Now if I am willing to make theſe over to *you*, will *you* watch over them in the ſame manner? Will *you* take the ſame care (or as much more as you pleaſe) of each ſoul as I have hitherto done? Not ſuch *curam animarum* as you have taken theſe ten years in your own pariſh. Poor empty name! Has not your *pariſh* been in fact, as much a *ſine cure* to *you* as your *prebend?* Oh what account have *you* to give to the great Shepherd and Biſhop of ſouls!

18. There is one more *excuſe* for denying this work of God, taken from the *inſtruments* employed therein: that is, "That they are *wicked* men." And a thouſand ſtories have been handed about to prove it.

But you may obſerve, their *wickedneſs* was not heard of, till after they *went about doing good.* Their reputation for *honeſty* was till then unblemiſhed but it was impoſſible it ſhould continue ſo, when they were publickly employed in *teſtifying of the world, that its deeds were evil.* It could not be but the ſcriptures ſhould be fulfilled.

The

The ſervant is not above his maſter. If they have called the maſter of the houſe beelzebub, how much more them of his houſhold?

* Yet I cannot but remind conſiderate men, in how remarkable a manner the wiſdom of God has for many years guarded againſt this pretence, with reſpect to my brother and me in particular. Scarce any two men in *Great-Britain*, of our rank, have been ſo held out, as it were, to all the world; eſpecially of thoſe who from their childhood had always loved and ſtudiouſly ſought retirement. And I had procured what I ſought, I was quite ſafe, as I ſuppoſed, in a little country town, when I was required to return to *Oxford*, without delay, to take the charge of ſome young gentlemen, by Dr. *Morley*, the only man then in *England* to whom I could deny nothing. From that time both my brother and I (utterly againſt our will) came to be more and more obſerved and known, till we were more ſpoken of, than, perhaps, two ſo inconſiderable perſons ever were before in the nation. To make us more publick ſtill, as *honeſt* madmen at leaſt, by a ſtrange concurrence of providences overturning all our preceding reſolutions, we were hurried away to *America*. However, at our return from thence, we were reſolved to retire out of the world at once; being ſated with noiſe, hurry and fatigue, and ſeeking nothing but to be at reſt. Indeed for a long ſeaſon, the greateſt pleaſure I had deſired, on this ſide eternity was

Tacitum

Tacitum Sylvas inter reptare ſalubres,
Quærentem quicquid dignum ſapiente bonoque.

And we had attained our deſire. We wanted nothing. We looked for nothing more in this world, when we were dragged out again, by earneſt importunity, to preach at one place and another, and another, and ſo carried on, we knew not how, without any deſign but the general one, of ſaving ſouls, into a ſituation, which had it been named to us at firſt, would have appeared far worſe than death.

* 19. What a ſurpriſing *apparatus* of Providence was here! And what ſtronger demonſtrations could have been given, of men's acting from *a zeal* for God, whether it were *according to knowledge* or no? What perſons could, in the nature of things, have been (antecedently) leſs liable to exception, with regard to their *moral character*, at leaſt, than thoſe the all-wiſe God hath now employed? Indeed I cannot deviſe what manner of men could have been more unexceptionable on all accounts. Had God endued us with greater natural or acquired abilities, that very thing might have been turned into an objection. Had he been remarkably *defective*, it would have been matter of objection, on the other hand. Had we been *diſſenters* of any kind, or even *low-church men*, (ſo called) it would have been a great ſtumbling-block in the way of thoſe who are *zealous for the church*. And yet had we

conti-

continued in the impetuoſity of our *high-church zeal*, neither ſhould we have been willing to converſe with *diſſenters*, nor they to receive any good at our hands. Some objections were kept out of the way, by our known *contempt* of money and preferment: and others, by that rigorous ſtrictneſs of life, which we exacted, not of others, but ourſelves only. Inſomuch, that twelve or fourteen years ago, the cenſure of one who had narrowly obſerved us, (*me*, in particular) went no farther than this;

" Does *John* beyond his ſtrength perſiſt to go,
" To his frail carcaſe literally foe?
" Careleſs of health, as if in haſte to die,
" And laviſh time t' inſure eternity!"

So that upon the whole, I ſee not what God could have done more in this reſpect which he hath not done. Or what *inſtruments* he could have employed in ſuch a work, who would have been leſs liable to exception.

20. Neither can I conceive how it was poſſible to do that work, the doing of which, we are ſtill under the ſtrongeſt conviction, is bound upon us at the peril of our own ſouls, in a leſs exceptionable manner. We have, by the grace of God, behaved not only with meekneſs, but with all tenderneſs towards all men; with all the tenderneſs which we conceived it was poſſible to uſe, without betraying their ſouls. And from the

the very firſt, it has been our ſpecial care, to deal tenderly with our brethren the clergy. We have not willingly provoked them at any time; neither any *ſingle* clergyman. We have not *ſought* occaſion to publiſh their faults; we have not *uſed* a thouſand occaſions that offered. When we were conſtrained to ſpeak ſomething, we ſpake *as little* as we believed we could, without offending God: and that little, though in plain and ſtrong words, yet as *mildly* and *lovingly* as we were able. And in the ſame courſe we have ſteadily perſevered (as well as in earneſtly adviſing others to tread in our ſteps) even though we ſaw that with regard to them, by all this we profited nothing; though we knew we were ſtill continually repreſented as *implacable enemies to the clergy*, as railers againſt them, as ſlanderers of them, as ſeeking all opportunities to blacken and aſperſe them. When a clergyman himſelf has vehemently accuſed me of doing this, I bleſs God he could not provoke me to do it. I ſtill *kept my mouth as it were with a bridle*, and committed my cauſe to a higher hand.

21. The truth is, you impute that hatred to *us*, which is in *your own breaſt*. (I ſpeak not this of all the clergy; God forbid! But let it fall on whom it concerns.) *You*, it is certain, have ſhewn the utmoſt hatred to *us*, and in every poſſible way: unleſs you were actually to beat us (of which alſo we are not without precedent) or to ſhoot us through the head. And if you could prevail

prevail upon others to do this, I ſuppoſe you would think you did God ſervice. I do not ſpeak without ground. I have heard with my own ears ſuch ſermons, (in *Staffordſhire* particularly) that I ſhould not have wondered if as ſoon as we came out of the church, the people had ſtoned me with ſtones. And it was a natural conſequence of what that poor miniſter had lately heard, at the biſhop's viſitation: as it was one great cauſe of the miſerable riots and outrages which ſoon followed.

It is this, my brethren, it is *your own preaching*, and not *ours*, which *ſets the people againſt you*. The very ſame perſons, who are *diverted* with thoſe ſermons, cannot but *deſpiſe* you for them in their hearts: even thoſe who on *your* authority believe moſt of the aſſertions which you advance. What then muſt they think of you, who know the greateſt part of what you aſſert to be utterly falſe? They may pity and pray for you; but they can *eſteem* you no other, than falſe witneſſes againſt God and your brethren.

22. "But what need is there (ſay even ſome of a milder ſpirit) of this preaching in *fields* and *ſtreets?* Are there not *churches enough* to preach in?" No, my friend, there are not; not for us to preach in. You forget: we are not ſuffered to preach there; elſe we ſhould prefer them to any places whatever. "Well, there are miniſters enough without *you*." Miniſters *enough*, and churches *enough*; for what? To reclaim all the

the ſinners within the four ſeas? If there were, they would all be reclaimed. But they are not reclaimed. Therefore it is evident, that there are not *churches enough.* And one plain reaſon why, notwithſtanding all theſe churches, they are no nearer being reclaimed is this; they never come into a church; perhaps not once in a twelve-month, perhaps not for many years together. Will you ſay (as I have known ſome *tender hearted Chriſtians*) "Then it is *their own* fault; let them die and be damned." I grant it is *their own* fault. And ſo it was *my* fault and *yours*, when we went aſtray, like ſheep that were loſt. Yet the Shepherd of ſouls ſought after us, and went after us into the wilderneſs. And *oughteſt not thou to have compaſſion on thy fellow-ſervants, as he had pity on thee?* Ought not we alſo *to ſeek*, as far as in us lies, *and to ſave that which is loſt?*

* Behold the amazing love of God to the outcaſts of men! His tender condeſcention to their folly! They would regard nothing done *in the uſual way.* All this was loſt upon them. The *ordinary* preaching of the word of God, they would not even deign to hear. So the devil made ſure of theſe careleſs ones. For who ſhould pluck them out of his hand? Then God was moved to jealouſy, and went *out of the uſual way* to ſave the ſouls which he had made. Then over and above what was ordinarily ſpoken in his name, in all the houſes of God in the land, he commanded a voice to cry in the wilderneſs,

Prepare

Prepare ye the way of the Lord. The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent ye and believe the gospel.

* 23. Consider coolly, if it was not highly expedient, that something of this kind should be? How expedient, were it only on the account of those poor sinners against their own souls, who (to all human appearance) were utterly inaccessible every other way? And what numbers of these are still to be found, even in or near our most populous cities? What multitudes of them were some years since, both in *Kingswood*, and the fells about *Newcastle?* Who, week after week, spent the Lord's day, either in the ale-house, or in idle diversions, and never troubled themselves about going to church, or to any publick worship at all? Now, would you really have desired that these poor wretches should have sinned on, till they dropt into hell? Surely you would not. But by what other means was it possible they should have been plucked out of the fire? Had the minister of the parish preached like an angel, it had profited them nothing; for they heard him not. But when one came and said, "Yonder is a man preaching on the top of the mountain," they ran in droves to hear what he would say. And God spoke to their hearts. It is hard to conceive any thing else which could have reached them. Had it not been for *field-preaching*, the uncommonness of which was the very circumstance that recommended

mended it, they muſt have run on in the error of their way, and periſhed in their blood.

* 24. But ſuppoſe *field-preaching* to be in a caſe of this kind, ever ſo *expedient*, or even *neceſſary*, yet who will conteſt with us for *this province?* ——May we not enjoy this quiet and unmoleſted? Unmoleſted, I mean by any competitors.—For who is there among you, brethren, that is willing, (examine your own hearts) even to ſave ſouls from death at this price? Would not *you* let a thouſand ſouls periſh, rather than you would be the inſtrument of reſcuing them thus? I do not ſpeak now with regard to conſcience, but to the inconveniencies that muſt accompany it. Can *you* ſuſtain them, if you *would?* Can you bear the ſummer ſun to beat upon your naked head? Can you ſuffer the wintry rain or wind, from whatever quarter it blows? Are you able to ſtand in the open air, without any covering or defence, when God caſteth abroad his ſnow like wool, or ſcattereth his hoar-froſt like aſhes? And yet theſe are ſome of the ſmalleſt inconveniencies which accompany *field-preaching*. Far beyond all theſe, are the contradiction of ſinners, the ſcoffs both of the great vulgar, and the ſmall; contempt and reproach of every kind; often more than verbal affronts, ſtupid, brutal violence, ſometimes to the hazard of health, or limbs, or life. Brethren, do you envy us *this honour?* What I pray, would *buy you* to be a *field-preacher?* Or what, think you,

yeu, could induce any man of common ſenſe, to continue therein one year, unleſs he had a full conviction in himſelf, that it was the will of God concerning him.

* Upon this conviction it is (were we to ſubmit to theſe things on any other motive whatſoever, it would furniſh you with a better proof of our *diſtraction*, than any that has yet been found) that *we* now do, for the good of poor ſouls, what you cannot, will not, dare not do. And we deſire not that you ſhould; but this one thing, we may reaſonably deſire of you: do not increaſe the difficulties which are already ſo great, that without the mighty power of God, we muſt ſink under them. Do not aſſiſt in trampling down a little handful of men, who for the preſent ſtand in the gap, between ten thouſand poor wretches and deſtruction, till you find ſome others to take their places.

* 25. Highly needful it is, that ſome ſhould do this, leſt thoſe poor ſouls be loſt without remedy. And it ſhould rejoice the hearts of all who deſire the kingdom of God ſhould come, that ſo many of them have been ſnatched already from the mouth of the lion, by an *uncommon* (though not unlawful) way. This circumſtance therefore is no juſt *excuſe*, for not acknowledging the work of God. Eſpecially, if we conſider, that whenever it has pleaſed God to work any great work upon the earth, even from the earlieſt times, he hath ſtept more or leſs out of the

the *common* way: whether to excite the attention of a greater number of people, than might otherwise have regarded it; or to separate the proud and haughty of heart, from those of an humble, child-like spirit; the former of whom he foresaw, trusting in their own wisdom, would fall on that stone and be broken; while the latter, enquiring with simplicity, would soon know of the work, that it was of God.

26. "Nay (say some) but God is a God of *wisdom*. And it is his work, to give *understanding*. Whereas *this* man is one of them, and he is a *fool*. You see the *fruits* of their *preaching*." No, my friend, you don't. That is your mistake. A fool very possibly he may be. So it appears by his talking, perhaps writing too. But this is none of the *fruits* of our *preaching*. He was a fool before ever he heard us. We found and are likely to leave him so. Therefore his folly is not to be imputed to us, even if it continue to the day of his death. As we were not the cause, so we undertake not the cure of disorders of this kind. No fair man therefore can *excuse* himself thus, from acknowledging the work of God.

Perhaps you will say, "He is not a natural fool neither. But he is so ignorant! He knows not the first principles of religion." It is very possible. But have patience with him, and he will know them by and by. Yea, if he be in earnest to save his soul, far sooner than you can conceive. And in the mean time, neither is this an objection

tion of any weight. Many when they begin to hear us, may, without any fault of ours, be utter ſtrangers to the whole of religion. But this is no incurable diſeaſe. Yet a little while and they may be wiſe unto ſalvation.

Is the ignorance you complain of among this people (you who object to the *people* more than to their *teachers*) of another kind? Don't they "know, how in meekneſs to reprove or inſtruct thoſe that oppoſe themſelves?" I believe what you ſay: all of them do not: they have not put on gentleneſs and long-ſuffering. I wiſh they had: pray for them that they may; that they may be mild and patient toward all men. But what if they are not? Sure you do not make this an argument that God hath not ſent us? Our Lord *came*, and we come, *not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance: paſſionate* ſinners, (ſuch as theſe whereof you complain) as well as thoſe of every other kind. Nor can it be expected they ſhould be wholly delivered from their ſin, as ſoon as they begin to hear his word.

* 27. A greater ſtumbling-block than this is laid before you, by thoſe that *ſay and do not*. Such I take it for granted will be among us, although we purge them out as faſt as we can: perſons that *talk much* of religion, that *commend* the preachers, perhaps are diligent in hearing them: it may be, read all their books, and ſing their hymns; and yet no change is wrought in their hearts. Were they of old time as lions in their

their houſes? They are the ſame ſtill. Were they (in low life) ſlothful or intemperate? Were they tricking or diſhoneſt? Over-reaching or oppreſſive? Or did they uſe to borrow and not pay? *The Ethiopian hath not changed his ſkin.* Were they (in high life) delicate, tender, ſelf-indulgent? Were they nice in furniture or apparel? Were they fond of trifles, or of their own dear perſons? *The Leopard hath not changed her ſpots.* Yet their being with us for a time proves no more, than that we have not the miraculous diſcernment of ſpirits.

* Others you may find, in whom there was a real change. But it was only for a ſeaſon. They are now turned back, and are two-fold more the children of hell than before. Yet neither is this any manner of proof, that the former work was not of God. No, not though theſe apoſtates ſhould, with the utmoſt confidence, ſay all manner of evil againſt us. I expect they ſhould. For every other injury hath been forgiven, and will be to the end of the world. But hardly ſhall any one forgive the intolerable injury, of *almoſt perſuading him to be a Chriſtian.* When theſe men therefore who were with us, but went out from among us, aſſert things that may cauſe your ears to tingle, if you conſider either the ſcripture, or the nature of man, it will not ſtagger you at all. Much leſs will it excuſe you, for not acknowledging the work in general to be of God.

* 28. But

* 28. But to all this it may poſſibly be replied, "When you bring your credentials with you, when you prove by *miracles* what you aſſert, then we will acknowledge that God hath ſent you."

What is it you would have us *prove* by *miracles?* That the *doctrines* we preach are true? This is not the way to prove that: (as our firſt *reformers* replied to thoſe of the church of *Rome*, who, you may probably remember, were continually urging them with this very demand) We prove the *doctrines* we preach, by ſcripture and reaſon: and, if, need be, by antiquity.

What elſe is it then we are to prove by *miracles?*

Is it, 1. That *A. B.* was for many years without God in the world, a common ſwearer, a drunkard, a ſabbath-breaker?

Or, 2. That he is not ſo now?

Or, 3. That he continued ſo till he heard us preach, and from that time was another man? Not ſo. The proper way to prove theſe facts, is by the teſtimony of competent witneſſes: and theſe witneſſes are ready, whenever required, to give full evidence of them.

Or would you have us prove by miracles,

4. That this was not done *by our own power or holineſs?* That God only is able to raiſe the dead, thoſe who are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins? Nay, *if* you *hear not* Moſes *and the prophets* and apoſtles on this head, *neither would you believe tho' one roſe from the dead.*

It is therefore utterly unreasonable and absurd to require or expect the proof of *miracles*, in questions of such a kind, as are always decided, by proofs of quite another nature.

29. "But you relate them yourself." I relate just what I saw, from time to time: and this is true, that some of those circumstances seem to go beyond the ordinary course of nature. But I do not peremptorily determine, whether they were supernatural, or no? Much less do I rest upon them, either the proof of other *facts*, or of the *doctrines* which I preach. I prove these in the *ordinary* way; the one by testimony, the other by scripture and reason.

"But if you can work *miracles* when you please, is not this the surest way of proving them? This would put the matter out of dispute at once, and supersede all other proof."

You seem to lie under an entire mistake, both as to the nature and use of *miracles*. It may reasonably be questioned, whether there ever was that man living upon earth, except the man Christ Jesus, that could work miracles *when he pleased*. God only *when he pleased*, exerted that power, and by whomsoever it pleased him.

But if a man could work *miracles when he pleased*, yet is there no scripture authority, nor even example for doing it in order to satisfy such a demand as this. I do not read, that either our Lord, or any of his apostles, wrought any miracle

on

on such an occasion. Nay, how sharply does our Lord rebuke those who made a demand of this kind? When *certain of the scribes and of the pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee*; (Observe, this was their method of *answering* the strong reasons whereby he had just proved the works in question to be of God! *He answered and said to them, an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign. But there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet* Jonas, *Mat.* xii. 38, 39. *An evil and adulterous generation*! Else they would not have needed such a kind of proof. Had they been *willing to do his will*, they would, without this, have known that the doctrine was of God.

* *Miracles* therefore are quite needless in such a case. Nor are they so conclusive a proof as you imagine. If a man could and did work them, in defence of any doctrine, yet this would not *supersede other proof*. For there may be τερατα ψευδη; *lying wonders*, miracles wrought in support of falsehood. Still therefore his doctrine would remain to be proved, from the proper topicks of scripture and reason. And these even without *miracles* are sufficient. But *miracles* without these are not. Accordingly our Saviour and all his apostles, in the midst of their greatest miracles, never failed to prove every *doctrine* they taught, by clear scripture and cogent reason.

30. I presume, by this time you may perceive the gross absurdity, of demanding *miracles* in the

preſent caſe : ſeeing one of the propoſitions in queſtion, (over and above our general doctrines) *viz.* " That ſinners are reformed." can only be proved by teſtimony : and the other, " this cannot be done but by the power of God," needs no proof, being ſelf-evident.

" Why, I did once myſelf rejoice to hear, (ſays a grave citizen, with an *air* of great *importance*) that ſo many ſinners were reformed, till I found they were only turned from one wickedneſs to another: that they were turned from curſing or ſwearing, or drunkenneſs, into no leſs *damnable* ſin than that of *ſchiſm*."

Do you know what you ſay ? You have, I am afraid, a confuſed huddle of ideas in your head. And I doubt, you have not *capacity* to clear them up yourſelf ; nor *coolneſs* enough, to receive help from others.

However I will try. What is *ſchiſm ?* Have you any determinate idea of it ? I aſk thee rather, becauſe I have found, by repeated experiments, that a common *Engliſh* tradeſman receives no more light, when he hears or reads, " This is ſchiſm," than if he heard or read

Bombalio, ſtridor, clangor, taratantara, murmur.

Honeſt neighbour, don't be angry. Lay down your hammer, and let us talk a little on this head. You

You ſay, "We are in the damnable ſin of *ſchiſm*, and therefore in as bad a ſtate as adulterers or murderers."

I aſk once more, What do you mean by *ſchiſm?* "Schiſm! Schiſm! Why, it is ſeparating from the church." Ay, ſo it is. And yet *every* ſeparating from the church to which we once belonged, is not ſchiſm. Elſe you will make all the *Engliſh* to be ſchiſmatics, ſeparating from the church of *Rome*. "But we had juſt cauſe." So doubtleſs we had: whereas ſchiſm is a *cauſeleſs* ſeparation from the church of Chriſt. So far ſo good. But you have many ſteps to take before you can make good that concluſion, that a ſeparation from a *particular national* church, ſuch as the church of *England* is, whether with ſufficient cauſe or without, comes under the ſcriptural notion of *ſchiſm*.

However, taking this for granted, will you aver in cool blood, that all who die in ſuch a ſeparation, that is, every one who dies a Quaker, a Baptiſt, an Independent, or a Preſbyterian, is as infallibly damned as if he died in the act of murder or adultery? Surely you ſtart at the thought! It makes even nature recoil. How then can you reconcile it to the love that *hopeth all things?*

31. But whatever ſtate they are in, who *cauſeleſsly ſeparate* from the church of *England*, it affects not thoſe of whom we are ſpeaking; for they *do not ſeparate* from it at all.

You may eaſily be convinced of this, if you will only weigh the particulars following.

1. A great part of theſe went to *no church* at all, before they heard us preach. They no more pretended to belong to the church of *England*, than to the church of *Moſcovy*. If therefore they went to *no church* now, they would be no farther from the church than they were before.

2. Thoſe who did *ſometimes* go to church before, go three times as often now. Theſe therefore *do not ſeparate* from the church. Nay, they are united to it more cloſely than before.

3. Thoſe who *never* went to church at all before, do go now *at all opportunities*. Will common ſenſe allow any one to ſay, that theſe are *ſeparated from the church?*

4. The main queſtion is, Are they turned from doing the works of the devil, to do the works of God? Do they now live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in the preſent world? If they do, if they live according to the *directions* of the church, believe her *doctrines*, and join in her *ordinances:* with what face can you ſay, that theſe men *ſeparate* from the church of *England?*

32. But in what ſtate are they whom the clergy and gentry (and perhaps *you* for one) have ſucceſsfully laboured to preſerve from this damnable ſin of *ſchiſm?* Whom you have kept from hearing theſe men, and *ſeparating from the church?*

Is

Is not the drunkard that was, a drunkard ſtill? Enquire of his poor wife and family. Is not the common ſwearer ſtill horribly crying to God for damnation upon his ſoul? Is not the ſinner in every other kind, exactly the ſame man ſtill? Not better at leaſt, if he be not worſe, than he was ten years ago.

Now conſider, 1. Does the church of *England* gain either honour, or ſtrength, or bleſſing, by ſuch wretches as theſe calling themſelves her members? By ten thouſand drunkards, or whoremongers, or common ſwearers? Nay ought ſhe not immediately to ſpew them out? To renounce all fellowſhip with them? Would ſhe not be far better without them than with them? Let any man of reaſon judge.

2. Is the drunkard's *calling* himſelf of the church of *England*, of any more uſe to him, than to the church? Will this ſave him from hell, if he die in his ſin? Will it not rather increaſe his damnation?

3. Is not a drunkard of any other church, juſt as good as a drunkard of the church of *England?* Yea, is not a drunken *Papiſt* as much in the favour of God, as a drunken *Proteſtant?*

4. Is not a curſing, ſwearing *Turk*, (if there be ſuch an one to be found) full as acceptable to God, as a curſing, ſwearing *Chriſtian?*

Nay, 5. If there be any advantage, does it not lie on the ſide of the former? Is he not the

leſs inexcuſable of the two? As ſinning againſt leſs light?

O why will you ſink theſe poor ſouls deeper into perdition, than they are ſunk already? Why will you propheſy unto them peace, peace; when there is no peace? Why, if you do it not yourſelf, (whether you cannot, or will not, God knoweth) ſhould you hinder us from *guiding them into the way of peace?*

33. Will you endeavour to *excuſe* yourſelf, by ſaying, "There are not *many* who are the better "for your preaching: and theſe by and by will "be as bad as ever; as ſuch and ſuch an one is "already?"

I would to God I could ſet this in a juſt light? But I cannot. All language fails.

God begins a glorious work in our land. You ſet yourſelf againſt it with all your might; to prevent its beginning where it does not yet appear, and to deſtroy it wherever it does. In part you prevail. You keep many from hearing the word that is able to ſave their ſouls. Others who had heard it, you induce to turn back from God, and to liſt under the devil's banner again. Then you make the ſucceſs of your own wickedneſs an *excuſe* for not acknowledging the work of God! You urge "That not *many* ſinners were reformed! And that ſome of thoſe are now as bad as ever!"

Whoſe fault is this? Is it ours? Or your own? Why have not thouſands more been reformed?

Yea,

Yea, for every one who is now turned to God, why are there not ten thouſand? Becauſe you and your aſſociates laboured ſo heartily in the cauſe of hell; becauſe you and they ſpared no pains, either to prevent or to deſtroy the work of God! By uſing all the power and wiſdom you had, you hindered thouſands from hearing the goſpel, which they might have found to be the power of God unto ſalvation. Their blood is upon *your* heads. By inventing, or countenancing, or retailing lies, ſome refined, ſome groſs and palpable, you hindered others from profiting by what they did hear. *You* are anſwerable to God for theſe ſouls alſo. Many who began to taſte the good word, and run the way of God's commandments, you, by various methods, prevailed on to hear it no more. So they ſoon drew back to perdition. But know, that for every one of theſe alſo, God will require an account of *you* in the day of judgment.

34. * And yet, in ſpite of all the malice, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, not only of men, but of *principalities and powers*, of *the rulers of the darkneſs of this world*, of the *wicked ſpirits in high places*; there are thouſands found, who are turned from *dumb idols, to ſerve the living and true God*. What a harveſt then might we have ſeen before now, if all who ſay, they are *on the Lord's ſide*, had come, as in all reaſon they ought, *to the help of the Lord againſt the mighty?* Yea, had they only *not oppoſed* the work of God, had they only *refrained from* his meſſengers; might

not the trumpet of God have been heard long ſince in every corner of our land? And thouſands of ſinners in every county been brought to *fear God and honour the king?*

Judge of what immenſe ſervice we might have been, even in this ſingle point, both to our king and country. All who hear and regard the word we preach, *honour the king* for God's ſake. They *render unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's*, as well as *unto God the things that are God's.*—— They have no conception of *piety* without *loyalty*; knowing *the powers that be, are ordained of God.* I pray God to ſtrengthen all that are of this mind, how many ſoever they be. But might there not have been at this day, an hundred thouſand in *England*, thus minded more than are now? Yea verily; even by *our* miniſtry had not they who ſhould have ſtrengthened us, weakened our hands.

35. Surely, you are not wiſe! What advantages do you throw away! What opportunities do you loſe? Such as another day you may earneſtly ſeek, and nevertheleſs may not find them. For if it pleaſe God to remove *us*, whom will you find to ſupply our place? We are in all things *your ſervants for Jeſus ſake*; tho' the more we love *you*, the leſs we are loved. Let *us* be employed not in the higheſt, but in the meaneſt; and not in the eaſieſt, but the hotteſt ſervice. Eaſe and plenty we leave to thoſe that want them. Let us go on in toil, in wearineſs, in painfulneſs, in cold or hunger, ſo we may but teſtify

teſtify the goſpel of the grace of God. The rich, the honourable, the great, we are thoroughly willing (if it be the will of our Lord) to leave to *you*. Only let us alone with the poor, the vulgar, the baſe, the outcaſts of men.—Take alſo to yourſelves *the ſaints of the world* : but ſuffer us *to call ſinners to repentance* ; even the moſt vile, the moſt ignorant, the moſt abandoned, the moſt fierce and ſavage of whom we can hear. To theſe we will go forth in the name of our Lord, deſiring nothing, receiving nothing of any man (ſave the bread we eat, while we are under his roof) and let it be ſeen whether God has ſent us. Only let not *your* hands, who fear the Lord, be upon us. Why ſhould we be ſtricken of *you* any more ?

IV. 1. Surely ye are *without excuſe*, all who do not yet know the day of your viſitation ! The day, wherein the great God, who hath been forgotten among us, days without number, is ariſing at once to be avenged of his adverſaries, and to viſit and redeem his people. Are not his judgments and mercies both abroad ? And ſtill, will ye not learn righteouſneſs ? Is not *the* Lord *paſſing by?* Doth not *a great and ſtrong wind* already begin *to rend the mountains*, and to *break in pieces the rocks before the Lord?* Is not the *earthquake* alſo felt already ? And *a fire* hath begun to burn in his anger. Who knoweth what will be the end thereof ? But at the ſame time, he is ſpeaking to many in *a ſtill, ſmall*

voice. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear, leſt he be ſuddenly deſtroyed, and that without remedy!

2. What *excuſe* can poſſibly be made for thoſe, who are *regardleſs* of ſuch a ſeaſon as this? Who are at ſuch a criſis, ſtupid, ſenſeleſs, unapprehenſive; caring for none of theſe things? Who do not give themſelves the *pains* to *think* about them, but are ſtill *eaſy* and *unconcerned?* What! can there ever be a point, on which it more behoves you to *think?* And that with the cooleſt and deepeſt *attention?* As long as the heaven and the earth remain, can there be any thing of ſo vaſt importance, as God's laſt call to a guilty land, juſt periſhing in its iniquity!

You, with thoſe round about you, deſerved long ago to have *drank the dregs of the cup of trembling:* yea, to have been *puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* But he hath not dealt with you according to your ſins, neither rewarded you after your iniquities. And once more he is mixing mercy with judgment. Once more he is crying aloud, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O houſe of* Iſrael; and will you not deign to give him the hearing? If you are not careful to anſwer him in this matter. Do you ſtill ſhut your eyes, and ſtop your ears, and harden your ſtubborn heart? ——Oh beware, leſt God laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh!

3. Will

3. Will you plead, that you have other concerns to mind? That other buſineſs engages your thoughts? It does ſo indeed; but this is your fooliſhneſs; this is the very thing that leaves you without excuſe.—For what buſineſs can be of equal moment? The mariner may have many concerns to mind, and many buſineſſes to engage his thoughts: but not when the ſhip is ſinking. In ſuch a circumſtance (it is your own) you have but one thing to think of. Save the ſhip and your own life together! And the higher poſt you are in, the more deeply intent ſhould you be on this one point. Is this a time for diverſion? For eating and drinking, and riſing up to play? Keep the ſhip above water. Let all elſe go and mind *this one thing!*

4. Perhaps you will ſay, "So I do. I do mind this one thing, how to ſave the ſinking nation. And therefore now I muſt think of *arms* and *proviſions*. I have no time now to think of *religion*." This is exactly as if the mariner ſhould ſay, "Now I muſt think of my *guns* and *ſtores*. I have no time now to think of the *hold*." Why man, you muſt think of this, or periſh. It is *there* the leak is ſprung. Stop that, or you and all your *ſtores* will go together to the bottom of the ſea.

Is not this your very caſe? Then, whatever you do, *ſtop the leak*: elſe you go to the bottom! I do not ſpeak againſt your *ſtores*. They are good in their kind; and it may be well they are laid in.——But all your *ſtores* will not ſave the

the ſinking ſhip, unleſs you can ſtop the *leak*. Unleſs you can ſome way keep out theſe *floods of ungodlineſs*, that are ſtill continually pouring in, you muſt ſoon be ſwallowed up in the great deep, in the abyſs of God's judgments. This, this is the deſtruction of the *Engliſh* nation. It is *vice*, burſting in on every ſide, that is juſt ready to ſink us into ſlavery firſt, and then into the nethermoſt hell.——*Who is a wiſe man, and endued with knowledge among you?* Let him think of this. Think of this, all that love your country, or that care for your own ſouls. If now eſpecially you do not think of *this one thing*, you have no *excuſe* before God or man.

5. Little more *excuſe* have you, who are ſtill in *doubt* concerning *this* day of your viſitation. For you have all the proof that you can reaſonably expect or deſire, all that the nature of the thing requires. That in many places, abundance of notorious ſinners are totally reformed, is declared by a thouſand eye and ear-witneſſes, both of their preſent and paſt behaviour. And you are ſenſible, the proof of ſuch a point as this muſt, in the nature of things reſt upon teſtimony. And that God alone is able to work ſuch a reformation, you know all the ſcriptures teſtify. What would you have more? What pretence can you have, for *doubting* any longer? You have not the leaſt room to expect or deſire any other, or any ſtronger evidence.

I truſt,

I truſt, you are not of thoſe who *fortify* themſelves againſt conviction ; who are " *reſolved* they will never believe this." They aſk, " who are theſe men ?" We tell them plainly : but they credit us not. Another and another of their own friends is convinced, and tells them the ſame thing. But their anſwer is ready, " Are *you* turned methodiſt too ?" So *their* teſtimony likewiſe goes for nothing. Now how is it poſſible theſe ſhould ever be convinced ? For they will believe none but thoſe who ſpeak on *one* ſide.

6. Do you delay fixing your judgment, till you ſee a work of God, without any ſtumbling-block attending it ? That neither is yet nor ever will. *It muſt needs be, that offences will come.* And ſcarce ever was there ſuch a work of God before, with ſo few as have attended *this.*

When the *reformation* began, what mountainous offences lay in the way, of even the ſincere members of the church of *Rome ?* They ſaw *ſuch* failings in thoſe great men, *Luther* and *Calvin !* Their vehement *tenaciouſneſs* of their own opinions ; their *bitterneſs* toward all who differed from them ; their *impatience* of contradiction and utter want of *forbearance*, even with their own brethren.

But the grand ſtumbling-block of all, was, their open *avowed ſeparation* from the church ; their rejecting ſo many of the *doctrines* and *practices*,

tices, which the others accounted the moſt ſacred; and their continual *invectives* againſt the church they ſeparated from, ſo much ſharper than *Michael's* reproof of *Satan*.

Where there fewer ſtumbling-blocks attending the *reformation* in *England?* Surely no, for what was *Henry* the Eighth? Conſider, either his *character*, his *motives* to the work, or his *manner* of purſuing it! And even king *Edward's miniſtry* we cannot clear, of *perſecuting* in their turns, yea and *burning hereticks*. The main ſtumbling-block alſo ſtill remained, *viz.* open *ſeparation* from the church.

7. Full as many were the offences that lay in the way of even the ſincere members of the church of *England*, when the people called *Quakers* firſt profeſſed, that they were ſent of God to reform the land. Whether they were or no, is beſide our queſtion: it ſuffices for the preſent purpoſe to obſerve, that over and above their open, avowed, total *ſeparation* from the church, and their vehement *invectives* againſt many of her *doctrines*, and the whole frame of her *diſcipline:* they ſpent their main ſtrength in diſputing about *opinions* and *externals*, rather than in preaching faith, mercy, and the love of God.'

In theſe reſpects, the caſe was nearly the ſame when the *Baptiſts* firſt appeared in *England*. They immediately commenced a warm diſpute, not concerning the *vitals* of Chriſtianity, but concerning the *manner* and *time* of adminiſtering

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one of the *external ordinances* of it. And as their *opinion* hereof totally differed from that of all the other members of the church of *England*, ſo they ſoon openly declared their ſeparation from it, not without ſharp *cenſures* of thoſe that continued therein.

8. The ſame occaſion of offence was, in a ſmaller degree, given by the *Preſbyterians* and *Independents:* for they alſo ſpent great part of their time and ſtrength, in oppoſing the commonly received *opinions*, concerning ſome of the *circumſtantials* of religion; and for the ſake of theſe, *ſeparated* from the church.

* But I do not include that venerable man, Mr. *Philip Henry*, nor any that were of his Spirit, in this number. I know they abhorred contending about *externals*. Neither did they *ſeparate themſelves* from the church. They continued therein, till they were driven out, whether they would or no. I cannot but tenderly ſympathize with theſe; and the more, becauſe this is, in part, our own caſe. Warm men ſpare no pains, at this very day, to drive us out of the church. They cry out to the people, wherever one of us comes, "A mad dog, a mad dog!" If haply we might fly for our lives, as many have done before us. And ſure it is, we ſhould have complied with their deſire, we ſhould merely for peace and quietneſs have left the church long before now, but that we could not in conſcience do it. And it is on this ſingle motive, it is for

conſcience

conſcience ſake, that we ſtill continue therein; and ſhall continue, (God being our helper) unleſs they by violence thruſt us out.

9. * But to return. What are the ſtumbling-blocks in the preſent caſe, compared to thoſe in any of the preceding?

We do not diſpute concerning any of the *externals* or *circumſtantials* of religion. There is no room; for we *agree* with you therein. We approve of, and adhere to them all; all that we learned together when we were children, in our *catechiſm* or *common prayer-book*. We were born and bred up in your *own church*, and deſire to die therein. We always were, and are now, *zealous for the church*; only not with a blind, angry zeal. We hold, and ever have done, the ſame *opinions*, which you and we received from our foreſathers. But we do not lay the main ſtreſs of our religion on any *opinions*, right or wrong: neither do we ever begin, or willingly join in any *diſpute* concerning them. The weight of all religion, we apperehend, reſts on holineſs of *heart* and *life*. And conſequently, wherever we come, we preſs this with all our might. How wide then is the difference between our caſe and the caſe of any of thoſe that are above-mentioned? They *avowedly ſeparated* from the church: we utterly diſavow any ſuch deſign. They ſeverely, and almoſt continually, inveighed againſt the *doctrines* and *diſcipline* of the church they left. We approve both the *doctrines* and *diſcipline* of

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our church, and inveigh only againſt *ungodlineſs* and *unrighteouſneſs*. They ſpent great part of their time and ſtrength in contending about *externals* and *circumſtantials*. We agree with you in both; ſo that having no room to ſpend any time in ſuch vain *contention*, we have our deſire of ſpending and being ſpent, in promoting plain *practical religion*. How many ſtumbling-blocks are removed out of *your way?* Why do not you acknowledge the work of God?

10. If you ſay, "Becauſe you hold *opinions* which "I cannot believe are true:" I anſwer, Believe them true or falſe; I will not quarrel with you about any *opinion*. Only ſee that your heart be right toward God, that you know and love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; that you love your neighbour, and walk as your maſter walked, and I deſire no more. I am ſick of *opinions:* I am weary to bear them. My ſoul loaths this frothy food. Give me ſolid and ſubſtantial religion. Give me an humble, gentle lover of God and man; a man full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſy: a man laying himſelf out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. Let my ſoul be with *theſe* Chriſtians, whereſoever they are, and whatſoever *opinion* they are of. *Whoſoever* thus *doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the ſame is my brother, and ſiſter, and mother.*

11. Inexcuſably infatuated muſt you be, if you can even *doubt* whether the propagation of this religion

religion be of God ! Only more inexcuſable are thoſe unhappy men, who *oppoſe*, *contradict*, and *blaſpheme* it.

How long will you ſtop your ears againſt him, that ſtill crieth, *Why perſecuteſt thou me? It is hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks*; for a man to *contend with his Maker*. How long will you deſpiſe the well-known advice of a great and learned man, *Refrain from theſe men, and let them alone. If this work be of man, it will come to nought. But if it be of* God, *ye cannot overthrow it.* And why ſhould you *be found even to fight againſt* God ? If a man fight with God, ſhall he prevail ? *Canſt thou thunder with a voice like him?* Make haſte. Fall down. Humble thyſelf before him. Leſt he put forth his hand and thou periſh !

12. How long will you fight under the banner of the great enemy of God and man: you are now in his ſervice: you are *taking part with the devil* againſt God. Even ſuppoſing there were no other proof, this would undeniably appear, from the goodly company among whom you are enliſted, and who war one and the ſame warfare. I have heard ſome affirm, that the moſt bitter enemies to the preſent work of God, were *Phariſees*. They meant, men who had the *form* of godlineſs, but denied the *power* of it. But I cannot ſay ſo. The ſharpeſt adverſaries thereof whom I have hitherto known (unleſs one might except a few honourable men, whom I may be excuſed

excuſed from naming) were the ſcum of *Cornwall*, the rabble of *Bilſton* and *Darlaſton*; the wild beaſts of *Walſal*, and the turnkeys of *Newgate*.

13. Might not the very ſight of theſe *troops*, ſhew any reaſonable man, to what *general* they belonged? As well as the *weapons* they never fail to uſe; the moſt horrid *oaths* and *execrations*, and lawleſs *violence*, carrying away as a flood whatſoever it is which ſtands before it: having no eyes, nor ears, no regard to the loudeſt cries of reaſon, juſtice or humanity. Can *you* join heart or hands with theſe any longer? With ſuch an infamous, ſcandalous rabble-rout, roaring and raging, as if they were juſt broke looſe, with their captain *Apollyon*, from the bottomleſs pit? Does it not rather concern you, and that in the higheſt degree, as well as every friend to his king and country, every lover of peace, juſtice and mercy, immediately to join and ſtop any ſuch godleſs crew, as they would join to ſtop a *fire* juſt beginning to ſpread, or an *inundation* of the ſea?

14. If, on the contrary, you join with that godleſs crew, and ſtrengthen their hands in their wickedneſs, muſt not you, in all reaſon, be accounted, (like them) *a public enemy of mankind?* And indeed ſuch muſt every one appear, in the eye of unprejudiced reaſon, who oppoſes directly or indirectly, the *reformation* of mankind. By *reformation* I mean, the bringing them back (not to

to this or that ſyſtem of *opinions*, or to this or that ſett of *rites* and ceremonies, how decent and ſignificant ſoever: but) to the calm love of God and one another, to an uniform practice of juſtice, mercy and truth. With what colour can you lay any claim to humanity, to benevolence, to public ſpirit, if you can once open your mouth, or ſtir one finger, againſt ſuch a *reformation* as this?

* 'Tis a poor excuſe to ſay, "O, but the people are brought into ſeveral erroneous *opinions*." It matters not a ſtraw, whether they are or no; (I ſpeak of ſuch opinions as do not touch the foundation) it is ſcarce worth while to ſpend ten words about it. Whether they embrace this *religious opinion* or that, is no more concern to me, than whether they embrace this or that ſyſtem of *aſtronomy*. Are they brought to holy *tempers* and holy *lives?* This is mine, and ſhould be your enquiry: ſince on this, both ſocial and perſonal happineſs depend; happineſs, temporal and eternal. Are they brought to the love of God and the love of their neighbour? Pure religion and undefiled is this. How long then will you *darken counſel, by words without knowledge?* The plain religion now propagated is LOVE. And can you oppoſe this, without being *an enemy to mankind?*

15. No; nor without being an *enemy to your king and country:* eſpecially at ſuch a time as this. For however men of no thought may not

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fee and regard it, or hectoring cowards may brave it out, it is evident to every man of calm reflection, that our nation ſtands on the very brink of deſtruction. And why are we thus, but becauſe *the cry of our wickedneſs is gone up to heaven?* Becauſe we have ſo exceedingly, abundantly, beyond meaſure, *corrupted our ways before the Lord.* And becauſe to all our other abominations we have added, the open fighting againſt God; the not only rejecting, but even denying, yea, blaſpheming his laſt offers of mercy; the hindering others who were deſirous to cloſe therewith; the deſpitefully uſing his meſſengers, and the variouſly troubling and oppreſſing thoſe who did accept of his grace, break off their ſins, and turn to him with their whole heart.

16. I cannot but believe, it is *chiefly* on this account, that God hath now *a controverſy with our land.* And muſt not any conſiderate man be inclined to form the ſame judgment, if he reviews the ſtate of *public affairs*, for only a few years laſt paſt? I will not enter into particulars. But, in general, can you poſſibly help obſerving, that whenever there has been any thing like a *public attempt*, to ſuppreſs *this new ſect*, (for ſo it was artfully repreſented) another and another *public trouble* aroſe. This has been repeated ſo often, that it is ſurpriſing any man of ſenſe can avoid taking notice of it. May we *turn* at length *to him that ſmiteth us, hearing the rod and him that appointeth it!* May we *humble ourſelves under*

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the mighty hand of God, before the great deep ſwallow us up!

17. Juſt now, viz. on the 4th of this inſtant, *December*, the Rev. Mr. *Henry Wickham*, one of his Majeſty's juſtices of peace for the weſt-riding of *Yorkſhire* writes an order

To the conſtable of *Kighley*, commanding him, "to convey the body of *Jonathan Reeves*, (whoſe real crime is, the calling ſinners to repentance) to his Majeſty's gaol and caſtle of *York*: ſuſpected (ſaid the precept) of being a ſpy among us, and a dangerous man to the perſon and government of his Majeſty King *George*."

God avert the omen! I fear this is no preſage either of the repentance or deliverance of our poor nation!

18. If we will not turn and repent, if we will harden our hearts, and acknowledge neither his judgments nor mercies; what remains but the fulfilling of that dreadful word, which God ſpake by the prophet *Ezekiel: Son of man when the land ſinneth againſt me, by treſpaſſing grievouſly; then will I ſtretch forth my hand upon it, and break the ſtaff of the bread thereof.*——*Though theſe three men*, Noah, Daniel *and* Job, *were in it, they ſhould deliver but their own ſouls. Or if I bring a ſword upon the land, and ſay*, "SWORD, GO THROUGH THE LAND:"——*Or if I ſend a peſtilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood:*——*Though* Noah, Daniel *and* Job *were in it, as I live, ſaith the* Lord God, *they ſhall deliver*

deliver neither ſon nor daughter; they ſhall but deliver their own ſouls by their righteouſneſs, chap. xiv. ver. 13, 14. 17. 19, 20.

Yet behold, therein ſhall be left a remnant, that ſhall be brought forth, both ſons and daughters.—And ye ſhall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jeruſalem.—*And ye ſhall know that I have not done without cauſe, all that I have done in it, ſaith the* Lord God. Ver. 22, 23.

LONDON,
Dec. 18, 1745.

A Plain ACCOUNT of the

People called METHODISTS.

In a LETTER to the

Reverend Mr. *PERRONET*

VICAR of *Shoreham*, in KENT.

[Written in the YEAR 1748.]

Rev. and dear SIR,

1. SOME time since you desired an account of the *whole œconomy* of the people commonly called METHODISTS. And you received a true, (as far as it went) but not a full account. To supply what I think was wanting in that, I send you this account: that you may know not only their *practice*, on every head, but likewise the *reasons* whereon it is grounded, the *occasion* of

of every ſtep they have taken, and the *advantages* reaped thereby.

2. But I muſt premiſe, That as they had not the leaſt expectation at firſt, of any thing like what has ſince followed, ſo they had no previous deſign or plan at all, but every thing aroſe juſt as the occaſion offered. They ſaw or felt ſome impending or preſſing evil, or ſome good end neceſſary to be purſued. And many times they fell unawares on the very thing, which ſecured the good, or removed the evil. At other times they conſulted on the moſt probable means, following only *common ſenſe* and *ſcripture*: Tho' they generally found, in looking back, ſome thing in *Chriſtian antiquity* likewiſe, very nearly parallel thereto.

I. 1. About ten years ago, my brother and I where deſired to preach, in many parts of *London*. We had no view therein, but ſo far as we were able (and we knew God *could* work by whomſoever it pleaſed him) to *convince* thoſe who would hear, what true Chriſtianity was, and to *perſuade* them to embrace it.

2. The points we chiefly inſiſted upon were four: Firſt, That *orthodoxy* or *right opinions* is, at beſt, but a very ſlender *part* of religion, if it can be allowed to be any part of it at all: that neither does religion conſiſt in *negatives*, in bare harmleſſneſs of any kind; nor merely in *externals*, or doing good, or uſing the means of grace,

in works of piety (ſo called) or of charity: that it is nothing ſhort of, or different from *The mind that was in* Chriſt, The *image of* God ſtampt upon the heart, Inward *righteouſneſs* attended with the *peace* of God, and, *Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*. Secondly, That the only way under heaven to this religion, is to *repent and believe the goſpel*, or (as the apoſtle words it) *Repentance towards* God, *and faith in our* Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Thirdly, That by this faith, *He that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly*, is juſtified *freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in* Jeſus Chriſt. And laſtly, That *being juſtified by faith*, we taſte of the heaven to which we are going: we are holy and happy: we tread down ſin and fear, and *ſit in heavenly places* with Chriſt Jeſus.

3. Many of thoſe who heard this, began to cry out, that we brought *ſtrange things to their ears*: that this was doctrine which they never heard before, or, at leaſt, never regarded. They *ſearched the ſcriptures, whether theſe things were ſo*, and acknowledged *the truth as it is in* Jeſus. Their hearts alſo were influenced as well as their underſtandings, and they determined to follow Jeſus Chriſt, *and him crucified*.

4. Immediately they were ſurrounded with difficulties: all the world roſe up againſt them: neighbours, ſtrangers, acquaintance, relations, friends, began to cry out amain; "*Be not righte-*

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ous overmuch: why ſhouldſt thou deſtroy thyſelf? Let not *much religion make thee mad.*"

5. One and another and another came to us, aſking, What they ſhould do? Being diſtreſſed on every ſide, as every one ſtrove to weaken, and none to ſtrengthen their hands in God. We adviſed them, "Strengthen you one another. Talk together as often as you can. And pray earneſtly, with and for one another, that you may *endure to the end, and be ſaved.*" Againſt this advice we preſumed there could be no objection; as being grounded on the plaineſt reaſon, and on ſo many ſcriptures, both of the old Teſtament and new, that it would be tedious to recite them.

6. They ſaid, "But we want *you* likewiſe to talk with us often, to direct and quicken us in our way, to give us the advices which you well know we need, and to pray with us, as well as for us." I aſked, Which of you deſire this? Let me know your names and places of abode. They did ſo. But I ſoon found, they were too many for me to talk with ſeverally ſo often as they wanted it. So I told them, "If you will all of you come together, every *Thurſday*, in the evening, I will gladly ſpend ſome time with you in prayer, and give you the beſt advice I can."

7. Thus aroſe, without any previous deſign on either ſide, what was afterwards called, *a ſociety:* a very innocent name, and very common in

London, for any number of people *associating* themselves together. The thing proposed in their associating themselves together was obvious to every one. They wanted to *flee from the wrath to come*, and to assist each other in so doing. They therefore united themselves "in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they might help each other to work out their salvation."

8. "There is one only condition previously required, in those who desire admission into this society, *A desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins.*

They now likewise agreed, that as many of them as had an opportunity, would meet together every *Friday*, and spend the dinner hour in crying to God, both for each other, and for all mankind. †

9. It quickly appeared, that their thus uniting together, answered the end proposed therein. In a few months the far greater part of those who had begun to *fear* God, *and work righteousness*, but were not united together, grew faint in their minds, and fell back into what they were before. Mean while the far greater part of those, who were thus united together, continued *striving to enter in at the strait gate*, and to *lay hold on eternal life.*

10. Upon reflection, I could not but observe, this

† See the rules of the United Societies.

this is the very thing which was from the beginning of Chriſtianity. In the earlieſt times, thoſe whom God had ſent forth, *preached the goſpel to every creature*. And the οἱ ἀκροαταὶ, the body of hearers, were moſtly either Jews or Heathens. But as ſoon as any of theſe were ſo convinced of the truth, as to forſake ſin and ſeek the goſpel of ſalvation, they immediately joined them together, took an account of their names, adviſed them to watch over each other, and met theſe κατηχέμενοι (catechumens, as they were then called) apart from the great congregation, that they might inſtruct, rebuke, exhort, and pray with them, and for them, according to their ſeveral neceſſities.

11. But it was not long before an objection was made to this, which had not once entered into my thought. "Is not this making a ſchiſm? Is not the joining theſe people together, *Gathering churches out of churches*."

It was eaſily anſwered, if you mean only *Gathering people out of buildings called churches*, it is. But if you mean, dividing Chriſtians from Chriſtians, and ſo deſtroying Chriſtian fellowſhip, it is not. For 1ſt, Theſe were not Chriſtians before they were thus joined. Moſt of them were barefaced Heathens. 2. Neither are they Chriſtians, from whom you ſuppoſe them to be divided. You will not look me in the face and ſay they are. What! Drunken Chriſtians? Curſing and ſwearing Chriſtians? Lying Chriſti-

ans? Cheating Chriſtians? If theſe are Chriſtians at all, they are *devil Chriſtians* (as the poor *Malabarians* term them.) 3. Neither are they divided any more than they were before, even from theſe wrethed *devil Chriſtians.* They are as ready as ever to aſſiſt them, and to perform every office of real kindneſs towards them. 4. If it be ſaid, "But there are ſome true Chriſtians in the pariſh, and you deſtroy the Chriſtian fellowſhip between theſe and them." I anſwer, That which never exiſted, cannot be deſtroyed. But the fellowſhip you ſpeak of never exiſted. Therefore it cannot be deſtroyed. Which of thoſe true Chriſtians had any ſuch fellowſhip with theſe? Who watched over them in love? Who marked their growth in grace? Who adviſed and exhorted them from time to time? Who prayed with them and for them, as they had need? This, and this alone is Chriſtian fellowſhip: but alas! Where is it to be found? Look *eaſt* or *weſt*, *north* or *ſouth:* name what pariſh you pleaſe. Is this Chriſtian fellowſhip there? Rather are not the bulk of the pariſhioners a mere rope of ſand? What Chriſtian connection is there between them? What intercourſe in ſpiritual things? What watching over each others ſouls? What bearing of one anothers burdens? What a mere jeſt is it then, to talk ſo gravely, of *deſtroying* what never was? The real truth is juſt the reverſe of this: we *introduce* Chriſtian fellowſhip where it was *utterly deſtroyed.*

And

And the fruits of it have been peace, joy, love, and zeal for every good word and work.

II. 1. But as much as we endeavoured to watch over each other, we ſoon found ſome who did not *live the goſpel*. I do not know, that any hypocrites were crept in; for indeed there was no temptation. But ſeveral grew cold, and gave way to the ſins which had long eaſily beſet them. We quickly perceived, there were many ill conſequences of ſuffering theſe to remain among us. It was dangerous to others; inaſmuch as all ſin is of an infectious nature. It brought ſuch a ſcandal on their brethren, as expoſed them to what was not properly, the reproach of Chriſt. It laid a ſtumbling-block in the way of others, and cauſed the truth to be evil ſpoken of.

2. We groaned under thoſe inconveniences long, before a remedy could be found. The people were ſcattered ſo wide in all parts of the town, from *Wapping* to *Weſtminſter*, that I could not eaſily ſee, what the behaviour of each perſon in his own neighbourhood was. So that ſeveral diſorderly walkers did much hurt, before I was appriſed of it.

3. At length, while we were thinking of quite another thing, we ſtruck upon a method for which we have cauſe to bleſs God ever ſince. I was talking with ſeveral of the ſociety in

Briſtol, concerning the means of paying the debts there; when one ſtood up and ſaid, "Let every member of the ſociety give a *penny* a week till all are paid." Another anſwered, "But many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it." "Then, ſaid he, put eleven of the pooreſt with me, and if they can give any thing, well. I will call on them weekly, and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myſelf. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbours weekly: receive what they give, and make up what is wanting." It was done. In a while, ſome of theſe informed me, "they found ſuch and ſuch an one did not live as he ought." It ſtruck me immediately. "This is the thing; the very thing we have wanted ſo long." I called together all the *leaders* of the *claſſes*, (ſo we uſed to term them and their companies) and deſired, that each would make a particular enquiry, into the behaviour of thoſe whom he ſaw weekly. They did ſo. Many diſorderly walkers were detected. Some turned from the evil of their ways. Some were put away from us. Many ſaw it with fear, and rejoiced unto God with reverence.

4. As ſoon as poſſible, the ſame method was uſed in *London* and all other places. Evil men were detected, and reproved. They were borne with for a ſeaſon. If they forſook their ſins, we received them gladly: if they obſtinately

nately perſiſted therein, it was openly declared, that they were not of us. The reſt mourned and prayed for them, and yet rejoiced, that as far as in us lay, the ſcandal was rolled away from the ſociety.

5. It is the buſineſs of a leader

I. To ſee each perſon in his claſs, once a week at the leaſt: in order,
To enquire how their ſouls proſper?
To adviſe, reprove, comfort or exhort, as occaſion may require;
To receive what they are willing to give, toward the relief of the poor.

II. To meet the miniſter and the ſtewards of the ſociety, in order
To inform the miniſter of any that are ſick, or of any that are diſorderly and will not be reproved;
To pay to the ſtewards what they have received of their ſeveral claſſes in the week preceding.

6. At firſt they viſited each perſon at his own houſe: but this was ſoon found not ſo expedient. And that on many accounts. 1. It took up more time, than moſt of the leaders had to ſpare. 2. Many perſons lived with maſters, miſtreſſes or relations, who would not ſuffer them to be thus viſited. 3. At the houſes of thoſe who

were not ſo averſe, they often had no opportunity of ſpeaking to them but in company. And this did not at all anſwer the end propoſed, of exhorting, comforting or reproving. 4. It frequently happened, that one affirmed what another denied. And this could not be cleared, without ſeeing them together. 5. Little miſunderſtandings and quarrels of various kinds, frequently aroſe among relations or neighbours; effectually to remove which, it was needful to ſee them all face to face. Upon all theſe conſiderations it was agreed, that thoſe of each claſs ſhould meet all together. And by this means, a more full enquiry was made, into the behaviour of every perſon. Thoſe who could not be viſited at home, or no otherwiſe than in company, had the ſame advantage with others. Advice or reproof was given as need required; quarrels made up, miſunderſtandings removed. And after an hour or two ſpent in this labour of love, they concluded with prayer and thankſgiving.

7. It can ſcarce be conceived, what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation. Many now happily experienced that Chriſtian fellowſhip, of which they had not ſo much as an idea before. They began to *bear one anothers burthens*, and *naturally* to *care for each other*. As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, ſo they had a more endeared affection

affection for each other. And *ſpeaking the truth in love they grew up into him in all things, who is the head, even* Chriſt: *from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint ſupplied, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part, increaſed unto the edifying itſelf in love.*

8. But notwithſtanding all theſe advantages, many were at firſt extremely averſe to meeting thus. Some, viewing it in a wrong point of light, not as a *priviledge* (indeed an invaluable one) but rather a *reſtraint*, diſliked it on that account, becauſe they did not love to be reſtrained in any thing. Some were *aſhamed* to ſpeak before company. Others honeſtly ſaid, "I don't know why; hut I *don't like* it."

9. Some objected, "there were no ſuch meetings, when I came into the ſociety firſt. And why ſhould there now? I don't underſtand theſe things, and this changing one thing after another continually." It was eaſily anſwered. 'Tis pity but they had been at firſt. But we knew not then either the need or the benefit of them. Why we uſe them, you will readily underſtand, if you read over the rules of the ſociety. That with regard to theſe little prudential helps we are continually changing one thing after another, is not a weakneſs or fault (as you imagine) but a peculiar advantage which we enjoy. By this means we declare them all to be merely prudential, not eſſential, not

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of divine inſtitution. We prevent ſo far as in us lies, their growing formal or dead. We are always open to inſtruction; willing to be wiſer every day than we were before and to change whatever we can change for the better.

10. Another objection was, "there is no ſcripture for this, for claſſes and I know not what." I anſwer, 1. There is no ſcripture *againſt* it. You cannot ſhew one text which forbids them. 2. There is much ſcripture *for* it, even all thoſe texts which enjoin the ſubſtance of thoſe various duties whereof this is only an indifferent circumſtance, to be determined by reaſon and experience. 3. You ſeem not to have obſerved, that the ſcripture in moſt points, give only *general* rules: and leaves the *particular* circumſtances to be adjuſted, by the common ſenſe of mankind. The ſcripture (for inſtance) give that *general* rule, *Let all things be done decently and in order.* But common ſenſe is to determine on *particular* occaſions, what order and decency require. So in another inſtance, the ſcripture lays it down, as a *general*, ſtanding direction, *Whether ye eat or drink or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* But it is common prudence which is to make the application of this, in a thouſand *particular* caſes.

11. "But theſe ſaid another, are all *man's inventions.*" This is but the ſame objection in another form. And the ſame anſwer will ſuffice for any reaſonable perſon. Theſe are man's inventions

ventions. And what then? That is: they are methods, which men have found, by reaſon and common ſenſe for the more effectually applying ſeveral ſcripture rules, couched in general terms, to particular occaſions.

12. They ſpoke far more plauſible than theſe, who ſaid, "the thing is well enough in itſelf. But the *leaders* are inſufficient for the work. They have neither gifts nor graces for ſuch an employment." I anſwer, 1. Yet ſuch leaders as they are, it is plain God has bleſſed their labour. 2. If any of theſe is remarkably wanting in gifts or grace, he is ſoon taken notice of and removed. 3. If you know any ſuch, tell it to *me*, not to others, and I will endeavour to exchange him for a better. 4. It may be hoped, they will all be better than they are, both by experience and obſervation, and by the advices given them by the miniſters every *Tueſday* night, and the prayers (then in particular) offered up for them.

III. 1. About this time, I was informed, that ſeveral perſons in *Kingſwood*, frequently met together at the ſchool, and (when they could ſpare the time) ſpent the greater part of the night, in prayer, and praiſe, and thankſgiving. Some adviſed me to put an end to this; but upon weighing the thing throughly, and comparing it with the practice of the antient Chriſtians, I could ſee no cauſe to forbid it. Rather, I believed, it might be made of more general uſe. So I ſent them

them word, " I deſigned to watch with them, on the *Friday* neareſt the full moon, that we might have light thither and back again." I gave public notice of this, the *Sunday* before, and withal, that I intended to preach; deſiring, they and they only would meet me there, who could do it without prejudice to their buſineſs or families. On *Friday* abundance of people came. I began preaching between *eight* and *nine*; and we continued till a little beyond the noon of night, ſinging, praying and praiſing God.

2. This we have continued to do once a month ever ſince, in *Briſtol*, *London*, and *Newcaſtle*, as well as *Kingſwood*. And exceeding great are the bleſſings we have found therein: it has generally been an extreamly ſolemn ſeaſon; when the word of God ſunk deep into the heart, even of thoſe who till then knew him not. If it be ſaid, " this was only owing to the novelty of the thing (the circumſtance which ſtill draws ſuch multitudes together at thoſe ſeaſons) or perhaps to the awful ſilence of the night." I am not careful to anſwer in this matter. Be it ſo: however, the impreſſion then made on many ſouls, has never ſince been effaced. Now allowing, that God did make uſe either of the novelty or any other indifferent circumſtance, in order to bring ſinners to repentance, yet they are brought. And herein let us rejoice together.

3. Nay, may I put the caſe farther yet? If I can probably conjecture, that either by the novelty

velty of this *antient* cuſtom, or by any other indifferent circumſtance, it is in my power to *ſave a ſoul from death, and hide a multitude of ſins:* am I clear before God if I do it not? If I do not ſnatch that brand out of the burning?

IV. 1. As the ſociety increaſed, I found it required greater care to ſeparate the precious from the vile. In order to this, I determined, at leaſt once in three months, to talk with every member myſelf, and to inquire at their own mouths, as well as of their leaders and neighbours, whether they grew in grace and in the kingdom of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? At theſe ſeaſons I likewiſe particularly enquire, Whether there be any miſunderſtanding or differences among them? That every hindrance of peace and brotherly love, may be taken out of the way.

2. To each of thoſe, of whoſe ſerioufneſs and good converſation, I found no reaſon to doubt, I gave a teſtimony under my own hand, by writing their name on a *ticket* prepared for that purpoſe: every ticket implying as ſtrong a recommendation of the perſon to whom it was given, as if I had wrote at length, "I believe the bearer hereof to be one that fears God and works righteouſneſs."

3. Thoſe who bore theſe tickets (theſe Σύμβολα or *Teſſeræ*, as the antients termed them; being of juſt the ſame force with the ἐπιστολαὶ συστατικαὶ, *commendatory letters* mentioned by the apoſtle) wherever

wherever they came, were acknowledged by their brethren, and received with all chearfulneſs. Theſe were likewiſe of uſe in other reſpects. By theſe it was eaſily diſtinguiſhed when the ſociety were to meet a-part, who were members of it and who not. Theſe alſo ſupplied us with a quiet and inoffenſive method, of removing any diſorderly member. He has no new ticket, at the quarterly viſitation; (for ſo often the tickets are changed) and hereby it is immediately known, that he is no longer of the community.

V. The thing which I was greatly afraid of all this time, and which I reſolved to uſe every poſſible method of preventing was, a narrowneſs of ſpirit, a party-zeal, a being ſtreightened in our own bowels; that miſerable bigotry, which makes ſo many ſo unready to believe, that there is any work of God but among themſelves. I thought it might be a help againſt this, frequently to read, to all who were willing to hear, the accounts I received from time to time, of the work which God is carrying on in the earth, both in our own and other countries, not among us alone, but among thoſe of various opinions and denominations. For this I allotted one evening in every month. And I find no cauſe to repent my labour. It is generally a time of ſtrong conſolation to thoſe who love God, and all mankind for his ſake: as well as of breaking down the partition walls, which either the craft of the devil,

vil, or the folly of men has built up: and of encouraging every child of God to say, (O when shall it once be?) *Whosoever doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

VI. 1. By the blessing of God upon their endeavours to help one another, many found the pearl of great price. Being justified by faith, they had *peace with* God, *through our* Lord Jesus Christ. These felt a more tender affection than before, to those who were partakers of like precious faith: and hence arose such a confidence in each other, that they poured out their souls into each other's bosom. Indeed they had great need so to do: for the war was not over, as they had supposed. But they had still to wrestle both with flesh and blood, and with principalities and powers: so that temptations were on every side: and often temptations of such a kind, as they knew not how to speak in a class: in which persons of every sort, young and old, men and women, met together.

2. These therefore wanted some means of closer union: they wanted to pour out their hearts without reserve, particularly with regard to the sin which did still *easily beset* them, and the temptations which were most apt to prevail over them. And they were the more desirous of this, when they observed it was the express advice of an inspired writer, *Confess your faults*

one

one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed..

3. In compliance with their desire, I divided them into smaller companies; putting the married or single men, and married or single women together. The chief rules of these *bands*, (*i. e.* little companies: so that old *English* word signifies) run thus:

In order to *confess our faults one to another*, and pray one for another that we may be healed, we intend,

" 1. To meet once a week, at the least:

2. To come punctually at the hour appointed;

3. To begin with singing or prayer;

4. To speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our soul, with the faults we have committed in thought word or deed, and the temptations we have felt, since our last meeting:

5. To desire some person among us (thence called a *Leader*) to speak *his* own state first, and then to ask the rest in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins and temptations.

4. That their design in meeting might be the more effectually answered, I desired all the men-*bands* to meet me together every *Wednesday* evening, and the women on *Sunday*; that they might receive such particular instructions and such

ſuch exhortations, as from time to time might appear to be moſt needful for them : that ſuch prayers might be offered up to God, as their neceſſities ſhould require : and praiſe returned to the Giver of every good gift, for whatever mercies they had received.

5. In order to increaſe in them a grateful ſenſe of all his mercies, I deſired that one evening in a quarter, all the men in band ; on a ſecond, all the woman would meet ; and on a third, both men and women together ; that we might together *eat bread* (as the antient Chriſtians did) *with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart.* At theſe *Love-feaſts* (ſo we termed them, retaining the name, as well as the thing, which was in uſe from the beginning) our food is only a little plain cake and water. But we ſeldom return from them, without being fed not only with the *meat which periſheth*, but with *that which endureth to everlaſting life.*

6. Great and many are the advantages which have ever ſince flowed, from this cloſer union of the believers with each other. They prayed for one another, that they might be healed of the faults they had confeſſed : and it was ſo. The chains were broken : the bands were burſt in ſunder, and ſin had no more dominion over them. Many were delivered from the temptations, out of which till then they found no way to eſcape. They were built up in our moſt holy faith. They rejoiced in the Lord more abundantly.

dantly. They were ſtrengthened in love, and more effectually provoked to abound in every good work.

7. But it was ſoon objected to the *bands* (as to the *claſſes* before) "Theſe were not at firſt. There is no ſcripture for them. Theſe are men's works, man's building, man's invention." I reply, as before, theſe are alſo prudential helps, grounded on reaſon and experience, in order to apply the general rules given in ſcripture according to particular circumſtances.

8. An objection much more boldly and frequently urged, is that "all theſe bands are mere *popery*." I hope I need not paſs a harder cenſure on thoſe (moſt of them at leaſt) who affirm this, than that they talk of they know not what, they betray in themſelves the moſt groſs and ſhameful ignorance. Do not they yet know, that the only *popiſh* confeſſion is, the confeſſion made by a ſingle perſon to a prieſt? (And this itſelf is in no wiſe condemned by our church; nay, ſhe recommends it in ſome caſes) whereas, that *we* practiſe, is, the confeſſion of ſeveral perſons conjointly, not to a prieſt, but to each other. Conſequently, it has no analogy at all to *popiſh* confeſſion. But the truth is, this is a ſtale objection, which many people make againſt any thing they do not like. It is all *popery* out of hand.

VII. 1. And yet while moſt of theſe who were thus intimately joined together, went on daily

daily from faith to faith: some fell from the faith, either all at once, by falling into known, wilful sin; or gradually, and almost insensibly, by giving way in what they called little things; by sins of omission, by yielding to heart sins, or by not watching unto prayer. The exhortations and prayers used among the believers, did no longer profit these. They wanted advice and instructions suited to their case; which as soon as I observed I separated them from the rest, and desired them to meet me a-part on *Saturday* evenings.

2. At this hour, all the hymns, exhortations and prayers, are adapted to their circumstances: being wholly suited to those, who *did* see God, but have now lost the light of his countenance: and who mourn after him, and refuse to be comforted, till they know he has healed their backsliding.

3. By applying both the threats and promises of God, to these real (not nominal) *penitents*, and by crying to God in their behalf, we endeavoured to bring them back to the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls: not by any of the fopperies of the *Roman* church, although in some measure countenanced by antiquity. In prescribing hair-shirts, and bodily austerities, we durst not follow even the antient church: although we had unawares, both in dividing οἱ πιστοὶ the believers from the rest of the society, and in separating the *penitents* from

them, and appointing a peculiar ſervice for them.

VIII. 1. Many of theſe ſoon recovered the ground they had loſt. Yea, they roſe the higher for their fall: being more watchful than ever, and more meek and lowly, as well as ſtronger in the faith that worketh by love. They now out-ran the greater part of their brethren, continually walking in the light of God, and having fellowſhip with the Father, and with his Son, Jeſus Chriſt.

2. I ſaw it might be uſeful to give ſome advices to all thoſe, who thus continued in the light of God's countenance, which the reſt of their brethren did not want, and probably could not receive. So I deſired a ſmall number of ſuch as appeared to be in this ſtate, to ſpend an hour with me every *Monday* morning. My deſign was, not only, to direct them, how to *preſs after perfection*; to exerciſe their every grace, and improve every talent they had received; and to incite them to love one another more, and to watch more carefully over each other: but alſo to have a *ſelect company*, to whom I might unboſom myſelf on all occaſions, without reſerve: and whom I could propoſe to all their brethren as a pattern of love, of holineſs, and of good works.

3. They had no need of being incumbered with many rules; having the beſt rule of all in their

their hearts. No peculiar directions were therefore given to them : excepting only these three.

Firſt, let nothing ſpoken in this ſociety, be ſpoken again. (Hereby we had the more full confidence in each other.)

Secondly, Every member agrees, to ſubmit to his miniſter in all indifferent things.

Thirdly, Every member will bring once a week, all he can ſpare toward a common ſtock.

4. Every one here has an equal liberty of ſpeaking, there being none greater or leſs than another. I could ſay freely to theſe, when they were met together, *ye may all propheſy one by one* (taking that word in its lower ſenſe) *that all may learn, and all may be comforted.* And I often found the advantage of ſuch a free converſation, and that *in the multitude of counſellors there is ſafety.* Any who is inclined ſo to do, is likewiſe incouraged, to pour out his ſoul to God. And here eſpecially we have found, that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

IX. 1. This is the plaineſt and cleareſt account I can give of the people, commonly called *Methodiſts.* It remains only, to give you a ſhort account, of thoſe who *ſerve* their brethren in love. There are *leaders* of claſſes and bands (ſpoken of before) *aſſiſtants, ſtewards, viſitors* of the ſick, and *ſchool-maſters.*

2. In the third part of the *appeal,* I have mentioned, how we were led to accept of *lay-aſſiſtants.*

Their office is, in the abſence of the miniſter.

1. To expound every morning and evening:
2. To meet the united ſociety, the bands, the ſelect ſociety, and the penitents once a week.
3. To viſit the claſſes once a quarter.
4. To hear and decide all differences:
5. To put the diſorderly back on trial, and to receive on trial for the bands or ſociety:
6. To ſee that the ſtewards, the leaders, and the ſchool-maſters faithfully diſcharge their ſeveral offices:
7. To meet the leaders of the bands and claſſes weekly, and the ſtewards, and to overlook their accounts.

X. 1. But long before this, I felt the weight of far different care, namely, care of temporal things. The quarterly ſubſcriptions amounted, at a mean computation, to above *three hundred pounds* a year. This was to be laid out, partly in repairs, partly in other neceſſary expences, and partly in paying debts. The weekly contributions fell little ſhort of *eight pounds* a week; which was to be diſtributed as every one had need. And I was expected to take thought for all theſe things: but it was a burthen I was not able to bear. So I choſe out firſt, one, then *four*, and after a time, *ſeven* as prudent men as I knew, and deſired them to take the charge of theſe things upon themſelves, that I might have no incumbrance of this kind.

2. The

2. The buſineſs of theſe *ſtewards* is
   To manage the temporal things of the ſociety:
   To receive the ſubſcriptions and contributions:
   To expend what is needful from time to time;
   To ſend relief to the poor:
   To keep an exact account of all receipts and expences;
   To inform the *miniſter* if any of the rules of the ſociety are not punctually obſerved;
   To tell the preachers in love, if they think any thing amiſs, either in their doctrine or life.
3. The rules of the ſtewards are,
   1. Be frugal. Save every thing that can be ſaved honeſtly.
   2. Spend no more than you receive. Contract no debts.
   3. Have no long accounts. Pay every thing within the week.
   4. Give none that aſks relief, either an ill word or an ill look. Do not hurt them, if you cannot help.
   5. Expect no thanks from man.

4. They met together at *ſix* every *Thurſday* morning: conſult on the buſineſs which came before them: ſent relief to the ſick, as every one had need, and gave the remainder of what had been

contributed each week, to thoſe who appeared to be in the moſt preſſing want. So that all was concluded within the week; what was brought on *Tueſday*, being conſtantly expended on *Thurſday*. I ſoon had the pleaſure to find, that all theſe temporal things, were done with the utmoſt faithfulneſs and exactneſs. So that my cares of this kind were at an end. I had only to reviſe the accounts, to tell them, if I thought any thing might be amended, and to conſult how deficiencies might be ſupplied from time to time. For theſe were frequent and large, (ſo far were we from abundance) the income by no means anſwering the expences. But that we might not faint, ſometimes we had unforeſeen helps, in times of the greateſt perplexity. At other times we borrowed, larger or ſmaller ſums. Of which the greateſt part has ſince been repaid. But I owe ſome hundred pounds to this day. So much have I *gained* by preaching the goſpel!

XI. 1. But it was not long before the ſtewards found a great difficulty, with regard to the ſick. Some were ready to periſh, before they knew of their illneſs. And when they did know, it was not in their power, (being perſons generally employed in trade) to viſit them ſo often as they deſired.

2. When I was apprized of this, I laid the caſe at large before the whole ſociety: ſhewed, how impoſſible it was, for the *ſtewards* to attend

all

all that were ſick in all parts of the town: deſired the *leaders* of *claſſes* would more carefully enquire, and more conſtantly inform them, who were ſick: and aſked, "Who among you is willing as well as able, to ſupply this lack of ſervice?"

3. The next morning, many willingly offered themſelves. I choſe ſix and forty of them, whom I judged to be of the moſt tender, loving ſpirit; divided the town into twenty-three parts, and deſired two of them to viſit the ſick in each diviſion.

4. It is the buſineſs of a *viſitor* of the ſick,

To ſee every ſick perſon within his diſtrict thrice a week;

To enquire into the ſtate of their ſouls, and adviſe them, as occaſion may require;

To enquire into their diſorders, and procure advice for them;

To relieve them, if they are in want:

To do any thing for them, which he (or ſhe) can do;

To bring in his accounts weekly to the ſtewards.†

Upon reflection, I ſaw how exactly in this alſo, we had copied after the primitive church. What were the antient deacons? What was *Phebe* the *deaconeſs*, but ſuch a *viſitor* of the ſick?

5. I did not think it needful to give them any particular rules, beſide thoſe that follow:

1. Be plain and open in dealing with ſouls;

 2. Be

† The leaders now do this.

2. Be mild, tender, patient:

3. Be cleanly in all you do for the ſick;

4. Be not nice.

6. We have ever ſince had great reaſon to praiſe God, for his continued bleſſing on this undertaking. Many lives have been ſaved: many ſickneſſes healed, much pain and want prevented or removed. Many heavy hearts have been made glad; many mourners comforted. And the *viſitors* have found from him whom they ſerve, a preſent reward for all their labour

XII. 1. But I was ſtill in pain for many of the poor that were ſick: there was ſo great expence, and ſo little profit. And firſt, I reſolved to try, whether they might not receive more benefit in the *hoſpitals*. Upon the trial, we found, there was indeed leſs expence: but no more good done than before. I then aſked the advice of ſeveral phyſicians for them: but ſtill it profited not. I ſaw the poor people pining away, and ſeveral families ruined, and that without remedy.

2. At length I thought of a kind of deſperate expedient. "I will prepare, and give them phyſick myſelf." For *ſix* or *ſeven* and *twenty* years, I had made anatomy and phyſic the diverſion of my leiſure hours: though I never properly ſtudied them, unleſs for a few months, when I was going to *America*, where I imagined I might be of ſome ſervice to thoſe who had no regular phyſician among them. I applied to it again. I took

took in to my aſſiſtance an apothecary, and an experienced ſurgeon: reſolving at the ſame time, not to go out of my depth; but to leave all difficult and complicated caſes, to ſuch phyſicians as the patients ſhould chuſe.

3. I gave notice of this to the ſociety: telling them, that all who were ill of *chronical* diſtempers (for I did not care to venture upon *acute*) might, if they pleaſed, come to me at ſuch a time: and I would give them the beſt advice I could, and the beſt medicines I had.

4. Many came: (and ſo every *Friday* ſince:) among the reſt was one *William Kirkman*, a weaver, near *Old-Nichol-Street*. I aſked him, "What complaint have you?" "O ſir, ſaid he, a cough, a very ſore cough. I can get no reſt day nor night." I aſked "How long have you had it." He replied, "About *threeſcore* years: it began when I was *eleven* years old." I was nothing glad, that this man ſhould come firſt; fearing our not curing him, might diſcourage others. However I looked up to God and ſaid, "Take this *three* or *four* times a day. If it does you no good, it will do you no harm." He took it *two* or *three* days. His cough was cured: and has not returned to this day.

5. Now let candid men judge, does humility require me to deny a notorious fact? If not, Which is *vanity?* To ſay, *I* by my own ſkill, reſtored this man to health? Or to ſay, God did it by his own almighty power? By what fi-

gure of ſpeech this is called, *boaſting*, I know not. But I will put no name to ſuch a fact as this. I leave that to the Rev. Dr. *Middleton*.

6. In five months, medicines were occaſionally given, to above five hundred perſons. Several of theſe I never ſaw before; for I did not regard, whether they were of the ſociety, or not. In that time ſeventy-one of theſe, regularly taking their medicines, and following the regimen preſcribed (which three in four would not do) were entirely cured, of diſtempers long thought to be incurable. The whole expence of medicines during this time, was (nearly) *forty pounds*. We continued this ever ſince, and by the bleſſing of God, with more and more ſucceſs.

XIII. 1. But I had for ſome years obſerved many who, although not ſick, were not able to provide for themſelves, and had none who took care to provide for them: theſe were chiefly feeble, aged widows. I conſulted with the *ſtewards*, how they might be relieved? They all agreed, if we could keep them in one houſe, it would not only be far leſs expenſive to us, but alſo far more comfortable for them. Indeed we had no money to begin. But we believed He would provide, *who defendeth the cauſe of the widow*. So we took a leaſe of two little houſes near: we fitted them up, ſo as to be warm and clean. We took in as many widows as we had room for, and provided them with things needful

ful for the body: toward the expence of which I ſet aſide, firſt, the weekly contributions of the *bands*, and then all that was collected at the Lord's ſupper. It is true, this does not ſuffice: ſo that we are ſtill conſiderably in debt, on this account alſo. But we are perſuaded, it will not always be ſo; ſeeing *the earth is the* Lord's *and the fulneſs thereof.*

2. In this (commonly called, *The Poor Houſe*) we have now *nine* widows, *one* blind-woman, *two* poor children, *two* upper ſervants, a maid and a man. I might add *four* or *five* preachers. For I myſelf, as well as the other preachers who are in town, diet with the poor, on the ſame food, and at the ſame table. And we rejoice herein as a comfortable earneſt, of our eating bread together in our father's kingdom.

3. I have bleſſed God for this houſe, ever ſince it began: but lately much more than ever. I honour theſe widows; for they *are widows indeed.* So that it is not in vain, that without any deſign of ſo doing, we have copied after another of the inſtitutions of the apoſtolic age. I can now ſay to all the world, "Come, and ſee, how theſe Chriſtians love one another!"†

XIV. 1. Another thing, which had given me frequent concern, was the caſe of abundance of

 children.

† This has been ſince dropt for want of ſupport.

children. Some their parents could not afford to put to ſchool. So they remained like *a wild aſs's colt*. Others were ſent to ſchool, and learned, at leaſt, to read and write: but they learned all kind of vice at the ſame time: ſo that it had been better for them to have been without their knowledge, than to have bought it at ſo dear a price.

2. At length I determined, to have them taught in my own houſe; that they might have an opportunity of learning to read, write, and caſt accompts (if no more) without being under almoſt a neceſſity of learning heatheniſm, at the ſame time. And after ſeveral unſucceſsful trials, I found two ſuch ſchool-maſters as I wanted: men of honeſty, and of ſufficient knowledge; who had talents for, and their hearts in the work.

3. They have now under their care, near ſixty children: the parents of ſome pay for their ſchooling, but the greater part, being very poor, do not; ſo that the expence is chiefly defrayed by voluntary contributions. We have of late cloathed them too, as many as wanted. The rules of the ſchool are theſe that follow:

Firſt, No child is admitted under ſix years of age:

Secondly, All the children are to be preſent at the morning ſermon:

Thirdly,

Thirdly, They are at ſchool from ſix to twelve, and from one to five :†

Fourthly, They have no play-days:

Fifthly, No child is to ſpeak in ſchool, but to the maſters:

Sixthly, The child who miſſes two days in one week, without leave, is excluded the ſchool.

4. We appoint two ſtewards for the ſchool alſo. The buſineſs of theſe is,

To receive the ſchool ſubſcriptions, and expend what is needful;

To talk with each of the maſters weekly;

To pray with, and exhort the children twice a week:

To enquire diligently, whether they grow in grace and in learning, and whether the rules are punctually obſerved:

Every *Tueſday* morning, in conjunction with the maſters, to exclude thoſe children that do not obſerve the ſaid rules:

Every *Wedneſday* morning, to meet with, and exhort their parents, to train them up at home in the ways of God.

5. An happy change was ſoon obſerved in the children, both with regard to their tempers and behaviour. They learnt reading, writing, and arithmetic ſwiftly; and at the ſame time they were diligently inſtructed, in the ſound princi-

† Now they begin later.

ples of religion, and earneſtly exhorted to fear God, and work out their own ſalvation.

XV. 1. A year or two ago, I obſerved among many a diſtreſs of another kind. They frequently wanted, perhaps in order to carry on their buſineſs, a preſent ſupply of money. They ſcrupled to make uſe of a *pawn-broker:* but where to borrow it they knew not. I reſolved to try if we could not find a remedy for this alſo. I went (in a few days) from one end of the town to the other; and exhorted thoſe who had this world's goods, to aſſiſt their needy brethren. *Fifty* pounds were contributed. This was immediately lodged in the hands of *two* ſtewards: who attended every *Tueſday* morning, in order to lend to thoſe who wanted, any ſmall ſum, not exceeding *twenty ſhillings*, to be repaid within *three* months.

2. It is almoſt incredible, but it manifeſtly appears from their accounts, that with this inconſiderable ſum *two hundred* and *fifty* have been aſſiſted, within the ſpace of *one year*. Will not God put it into the heart of ſome lover of mankind, to increaſe this little ſtock? If this is not *lending unto the* Lord, what is? O confer not with fleſh and blood, but immediately,

"Join hands with God, to make a poor man live."†

3. I think, Sir, now you know all, that I know of

† We now lend any ſum, not exceeding five pounds.

of this people. You see the nature, occasion and design, of whatever is practised among them. And I trust, you may be pretty well able to answer any questions, which may be asked concerning them: particularly by those, who enquire concerning *my revenue*, and what I do with it all?

4. Some have supposed, this was no greater than that of the bishop of *London*. But others computed, that I received *eight hundred* a year from *Yorkshire* only. Now if so, it cannot be so little as *ten thousand pounds* a year, which I receive out of all *England!*

5. Accordingly a gentleman in *Cornwall* (the rector of *R*——) extends the calculation pretty considerably. "Let me see, said he: *two millions* of *Methodists:* and each of these paying *two-pence* a week." If so I must have *eight hundred* and *sixty thousand pounds* (with some odd *shillings* and *pence)* a year.

6. Tolerable competence! But be it more or less, it is nothing at all to *me*. All that is contributed or collected in every place, is both received and expended by others: nor have I so much as the *Beholding thereof with my eyes*. And so it will be, till I turn *Turk* or *Pagan*. For I look upon all this revenue, be it what it may, as sacred to God and the poor: (out of which, if I want any thing, I am relieved, even as another poor man.) So were originally all ecclesiastical revenues, (as every man of learning knows.)

And

And the bishops and priests *used* them only, *as such*. If any use them otherwise now, God help them!

7. I doubt not, but if I err in this, or any other point, you will pray God to shew me his truth. To *have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man* is the desire of,

Reverend and dear Sir,

Your affectionate brother and servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

THE

THE

Nature, Design, and *General Rules,*

OF THE

UNITED SOCIETIES,

In LONDON, BRISTOL, KINGSWOOD, and NEWCASTLE upon TYNE, &c.

1. IN the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in *London*, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come; which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every week, namely on *Thursday*, in

in the evening. To theſe, and as many more as deſired to join with them (for their number increaſed daily) I gave thoſe advices from time to time which I judged moſt needful for them; and we always concluded our meeting with prayer ſuited to their ſeveral neceſſities.

2. This was the riſe of the UNITED SOCIETY, firſt in *London*, and then in other places. Such a ſociety is no other than "*A company of men* having the form and ſeeking the power *of godlineſs, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their ſalvation.*"

3. That it may the more eaſily be diſcerned, whether they are indeed working out their own ſalvation, each ſociety is divided into ſmaller companies, called claſſes, according to their reſpective places of abode. There are about twelve perſons in every claſs; one of whom is ſtiled *The Leader*. It is his buſineſs,

1. To ſee each perſon in his claſs, once a week at leaſt; in order

To enquire how their ſouls proſper.

To adviſe, reprove, comfort or exhort, as occaſion require;

To receive what they are willing to give, toward the relief of the poor.

2. To meet the miniſter and the ſtewards of the ſociety once a week; in order

To inform the miniſter of any that are ſick, or of

of any that walk diſorderly, and will not be reproved:

To pay to the ſtewards what they have received of their ſeveral claſſes in the week preceding; And

To ſhew their account of what each perſon has contributed.

4. There is one only condition previouſly required in thoſe who deſire admiſſion into theſe ſocieties, *A deſire to flee from the wrath to come, to be ſaved from their ſins:* But, wherever this is really fixed in the ſoul, it will be ſhewn by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they ſhould continue to evidence their deſire of ſalvation,

Firſt, By doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind; eſpecially, that which is moſt generally practiſed. Such is

The taking the name of God in vain;

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or ſelling:

Drunkenneſs, *buying or ſelling ſpirituous liquors*; or *drinking them* (unleſs in caſes of extreme neceſſity:)

Fighting, quarreling, brawling; brother *going to law* with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing: the *uſing many words* in buying or ſelling:

The *buying or ſelling uncuſtomed goods*:

The

The *giving or taking things on uſury:* i. e. unlawful intereſt:

Uncharitable or *unprofitable* converſation; particularly ſpeaking evil of magiſtrates or of miniſters:

Doing to others as we would not they ſhould do unto us:

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God: As

The *putting on gold and coſtly apparel:*

The *taking ſuch diverſions* as cannot be uſed in the name of the Lord Jeſus:

The *ſinging* thoſe *ſongs*, or *reading* thoſe *books*, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God:

Softneſs, and needleſs ſelf-indulgence:

Laying up treaſures upon earth:

Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

5. It is expected of all who continue in theſe ſocieties, that they ſhould continue to evidence their deſire of ſalvation,

Secondly, By doing good, by being in every kind, merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every poſſible ſort, and as far as is poſſible to all men;

To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by cloathing the naked, by viſiting or helping them that are ſick, or in priſon.

To

To their ſouls, by inſtructing, *reproving* or exhorting all they have any intercourſe with: trampling under foot that enthuſiaſtick doctrine of devils, that "we are not to do good, unleſs *our heart be free to it.*"

By doing good eſpecially to them that are of the houſhold of faith, or groaning ſo to be; employing them preferably to others, buying one of another; helping each other in buſineſs; and ſo much the more, becauſe the world will love its own, and them only.

By all poſſible *diligence and frugality*, that the goſpel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race that is ſet before them, *denying themſelves, and taking up their croſs daily*; ſubmitting to bear the reproach of Chriſt, to be as the filth and off-ſcouring of the world; and looking that men ſhould *ſay all manner of evil of them falſely for the Lord's ſake.*

6. It is expected of all who deſire to continue in theſe ſocieties, that they ſhould continue to evidence their deſire of ſalvation,

Thirdly, By attending upon all the ordinances of God: Such are

The publick worſhip of God;

The miniſtry of the word, either read or expounded:

The ſupper of the Lord;

Family and private prayer;

Searching the ſcriptures; and

Faſting or abſtinence.

7. Theſe

7. These are the General Rules of our Societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, the only rule, and the sufficient rule both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways: We will bear with him for a season. But then if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own soul.

JOHN WESLEY,
CHARLES WESLEY,

May 1, 1743.

MINUTES

MINUTES

OF SOME LATE

CONVERSATIONS,

Between the Rev. Mr. WESLEYS, and Others.

Converſation the Firſt.

MONDAY, 25th of *June*, 1744.

THE following perſons being met at the Foundery, *John Weſley*, *Charles Weſley*, *John Hodges*, rector of *Wenvo*, *Henry Piers*, vicar of *Bexley*, *Samuel Taylor*, vicar of *Quinton*, and *John Meriton*, after ſome time ſpent in prayer, the deſign of our meeting was propoſed, namely to conſider,

1. What to teach,
2. How to teach, and
3. What

3. What to do? *i. e.* How to regulate our doctrine, discipline and practice.

We began with considering the doctrine of justification: the questions relating to, with the substance of the answers given thereto, were as follows.

Q. 1. What is to be justified?

A. To be pardoned, and received into God's favour, into such a state, that if we continue therein, we shall be finally saved.

Q. 2. Is faith the condition of justification?

A. Yes; for every one who believeth not is condemned; and every one who believes is justified.

Q. 3. But must not repentance and works meet for repentance go before this faith?

A. Without doubt: if by repentance you mean conviction of sin; and by works meet for repentance, obeying God as far as we can, forgiving our brother, leaving off from evil, doing good, and using his ordinances according to the power we have received.

Q. 4. What is faith?

A. Faith in general is, a divine, supernatural *elenchos* of things not seen; *i. e.* of past, future, or spiritual things: it is a spiritual sight of God and the things of God.

First, a sinner is convinced by the Holy Ghost, "Christ loved me and gave himself for me."—This is that faith by which he is justified or pardoned, the moment he receives it. Immediately the

the same Spirit bears witness, "Thou art pardoned: thou hast redemption in his blood."—And this is saving faith, whereby the love of God is shed abroad in his heart.

Q. 5. Have all Christians this faith? May not a man be justified and not know it?

A. That all true Christians have such a faith as implies an assurance of God's love, appears from *Rom.* viii. 15. *Eph.* iv. 32. 2 *Cor.* xiii. 5. *Heb.* viii. 10. 1 *John* iv. 10. and v. 19. And that no man can be justified and not know it, appears farther from the nature of the thing. For faith after repentance is ease after pain, rest after toil, light after darkness. It appears also from the immediate, as well as distant fruits thereof.

Q. 6. But may not a man go to heaven without it?

A. It does not appear from holy writ that a man who hears the gospel, can: (*Mark* xvi. 16.) whatever a Heathen may do. *Rom.* ii. 14.

Q. 7. What are the immediate fruits of justifying faith?

A. Peace, joy, love, power over all outward sin, and power to keep down inward sin.

Q. 8. Does any one believe, who has not the witness in himself, or any longer than he sees, loves, obeys God?

A. We apprehend not; *seeing God* being the very essence of faith; love and obedience the inseparable properties of it.

Q. 9. What

Q. 9. What ſins are conſiſtent with juſtifying faith?

A. No *wilful ſin.* If a believer *wilfully ſins*, he caſts away his faith. Neither is it poſſible he ſhould have *juſtifying faith* again, without previouſly *repenting*.

Q. 10. *Muſt* every believer, come into a ſtate of doubt, or fear, or darkneſs? Will he do ſo, unleſs by ignorance, or unfaithfulneſs? Does God otherwiſe withdraw himſelf?

A. It is certain, a believer, *need* never again come into condemnation. It ſeems, he need not come into a ſtate of doubt, or fear, or darkneſs: and that (ordinary at leaſt) he *will* not, unleſs by ignorance, or unfaithfulneſs. Yet it is true, that the firſt joy does ſeldom laſt long: that it is commonly followed by doubts and fears; and that God frequently permits great heavineſs, before any large manifeſtation of himſelf.

Q. 11. Are works neceſſary to the continuance of faith?

A. Without doubt; for a man may forfeit the free gift of God, either by ſins of omiſſion, or commiſſion.

Q. 12. Can faith be loſt, but for want of works?

A. It cannot but through diſobedience.

Q. 13. How is faith *made perfect by works?*

A. The more we exert our faith, the more it is increaſed. *To him that hath, ſhall be given.*

Q. 14. St. *Paul* ſays, *Abraham* was *not juſtified by*

by works. St. *James*, He was *juſtified by works.* Do they not contradict each other?

A. No: 1. Becauſe they do not ſpeak of the ſame juſtification. St. *Paul* ſpeaks of that juſtification, which was when *Abraham* was 75 years old, above 20 years before *Iſaac* was born: St. *James* of that juſtification, which was when he offered up *Iſaac* on the altar.

2dly. Becauſe they do not ſpeak of the ſame works: St. *Paul* ſpeaking of works that precede faith: St. *James*, of works that ſpring from it.

Q. 15. In what ſenſe is *Adam*'s ſin imputed to all mankind?

A. In *Adam* all die, *i. e.* 1. Our bodies then became mortal. 2. Our ſouls died, *i. e.* were diſunited from God. And hence, 3. We are all born with a ſinful, deviliſh nature. By reaſon whereof, 4. We are children of wrath, liable to death eternal. *Rom.* v. 18. *Eph.* ii. 3.

Q. 16. In what ſenſe is the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to all mankind, or to believers?

A. We do not find it expreſly affirmed in ſcripture, that God imputes the righteouſneſs of Chriſt to any: although we do find, that *faith is imputed* to us *for righteouſneſs.*

That text, "*As by one man's diſobedience all men were made ſinners, ſo by the obedience of one, all were made righteous,*" we conceive means, by the merits of Chriſt, all men are cleared from the guilt of *Adam*'s actual ſin.

We conceive farther, that through the obedience and death of Chriſt, 1. The bodies of all men become immortal after the reſurrection. 2. Their ſouls receive a capacity of ſpiritual life: And 3. An actual ſpark or ſeed thereof. 4. All believers become children of grace, reconciled to God, and 5. Made partakers of the divine nature.

Q. 17. Have we not then unawares leaned too much towards *Calviniſm?*

A. We are afraid we have.

Q. 18. Have we not alſo leaned towards *Antinomianiſm?*

A. We are afraid we have.

Q. 19. What is *Antinomianiſm?*

A. The doctrine which makes void the law through faith.

Q. 20. What are the main pillars hereof?

A. 1. That Chriſt aboliſhed the moral law:

2. That therefore Chriſtians are not obliged to obſerve it:

3. That one branch of Chriſtian liberty, is liberty from obeying the commandments of God:

4. That it is bondage, to do a thing, becauſe it is commanded, or forbear it becauſe it is forbidden:

5. That a believer is not *obliged* to uſe the ordinances of God or to do good works:

6. That a preacher ought not to exhort to good works: not unbelievers, becauſe it is hurtful; not believers, becauſe it is needleſs.

Q. 21. What

Q. 21. What was the occaſion of St. *Paul*'s writing his epiſtle to the *Galatians?*

A. The coming of certain men amongſt the *Galatians*, who taught, *Except ye be circumciſed and keep the law of* Moſes *ye cannot be ſaved.*

Q. 22. What is his main deſign therein?

A. To prove, 1. That no man can be juſtified or ſaved by the works of the law, either moral or ritual, 2. That every believer is juſtified by faith in Chriſt without the works of the law.

Q. 23. What does he mean by "*the works of the law?*" *Gal.* ii. 16, *&c.*

A. All works which do not ſpring from faith in Chriſt.

Q. 24. What by being *under the law? Gal.* iii. 23.

A. Under the *Moſaic* diſpenſation.

Q. 25. What law has Chriſt aboliſhed?

A. The ritual law of *Moſes.*

Q. 26. What is meant by *liberty? Gal.* v. 1.

A. Liberty, 1. From that law; 2. From ſin.

On TUESDAY *Morning, June* 26. *was conſidered.*

THE doctrine of ſanctification: with regard to which the queſtions aſked, and the ſubſtance of the anſwers given were as follows.

Q. 1. What is it to be ſanctified?

A. To be renewed in the image of God in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

 Q. 2. Is

Q. 2. Is faith the condition, or the inſtrument of ſanctification?

A. It is both the condition, and inſtrument of it. When we begin to believe, then ſanctification begins. And as faith increaſes, holineſs increaſes, till we are created anew.

Q. 3. What is implied in being *a perfect Chriſtian?*

A. The loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and ſoul, and ſtrength, *Deut.* vi. 5, 30, 6. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25—29.

Q. 4. Does this imply, that all inward ſin is taken away?

A. Without doubt: or how could we be ſaid to be ſaved *from all our uncleanneſſes?* v. 29.

Q. 5. Can we know one who is thus ſaved? What is a reaſonable proof of it?

A. We cannot without the miraculous diſcernment of Spirit, be infallibly certain of thoſe who are thus ſaved. But we apprehend, theſe would be the beſt proofs which the nature of the thing admit. 1. If we had ſufficient evidence of their unblameable behaviour, preceding 2. If they gave a diſtinct account of the time and manner wherein they were ſaved from ſin, and of the circumſtances thereof, with ſuch ſound ſpeech as could not be reproved. And

3. If upon a ſtrict enquiry afterwards from time to time, it appeared that all their tempers and words and actions were holy and unreprovable.

Q. 6.

Q. 6. How ſhould we treat thoſe who think they have attained this?

A. Exhort them to forget the things that are behind, and to watch and pray always, that God may ſearch the ground of their hearts.

WEDNESDAY, *June* 27.

WE began to conſider points of diſcipline: with regard to which the queſtions aſked, and the ſubſtance of the anſwers given were as follows.

Q. 1. What is the church of *England?*

A. According to the 20th article, the viſible church of *England* is, the congregation of Engliſh *believers*, in which the *pure word* of God is preached, and the ſacraments *duly* adminiſtered.

(But the word *church* is ſometimes taken in a looſer ſenſe, for "a congregation profeſſing to believe." So it is taken in the 26th article, and in the 1ſt, 2d, and 3d chapters of the *Revelation.*)

Q. 2. Who is a member of the church of *England?*

A. A believer, hearing the *pure word* of God preached, and partaking of the ſacraments duly adminiſtered, in that church.

Q. 3. What is it to be zealous for the church?

A. To be earneſtly deſirous of its welfare and increaſe: of its welfare, by the confirmation of its preſent members, in faith, hearing, and communicating:

municating: and of its increaſe, by the addition of new members.

Q. 4. How are we to defend the doctrine of the church?

A. Both by our preaching and living.

Q. 5. How ſhould we behave at a falſe, or railing ſermon?

A. If it only contain perſonal reflections, we may quietly ſuffer it: if it blaſpheme the work and Spirit of God, it may be better to go out of the church. In either caſe, if opportunity ſerve, it would be well to ſpeak or write to the miniſter.

Q. 6. How far is it our duty to obey the biſhops?

A. In all things indifferent. And on this ground of obeying them, we ſhould obſerve the canons, ſo far as we can with a ſafe conſcience.

Q. 7. Do we ſeparate from the church?

A. We conceive not: we hold communion therewith, for conſcience ſake, by conſtantly attending both the word preached, and the ſacraments adminiſtered therein.

Q. 8. What then do they mean who ſay, "you ſeparate from the church?"

A. We cannot certainly tell. Perhaps they have no determinate meaning: unleſs, by the church they mean *themſelves*, *i. e.* that part of the clergy who accuſe us of preaching falſe doctrine. And it is ſure we do herein ſeparate from them, by maintaining that which they deny.

Q. 9. But do you not weaken the church?

A. Do

A. Do not they who aſk this, by *the church* mean *themſelves?* We do not purpoſely weaken any man's hands. But accidentally we may, thus far: they who come to know the truth by us, will eſteem ſuch as deny it, leſs than they did before.

But the church, in the proper ſenſe, the congregation of *Engliſh* believers, we do not weaken at all.

Q. 10. Do you not entail a ſchiſm on the church? *i. e.* Is it not probable, that your hearers after your death, will be ſcattered into all ſects and parties? Or that they will form themſelves into a diſtinct ſect?

A. 1. We are perſuaded the body of our hearers will even after our death remain in the church, unleſs they be thruſt out.

2. We believe notwithſtanding, either that they will be thruſt out, or that they will leaven the whole church.

3. We do, and will do, all we can, to prevent thoſe conſequences, which are ſuppoſed likely to happen after our death.

4. But we cannot with a good conſcience neglect the preſent opportunity of ſaving ſouls while we live, for fear of conſequences which may poſſibly or probably happen, after we are dead.

Converſation the Second.

Briſtol, TUESDAY, *Auguſt* 1, 1745.

THE following perſons being met together at the New-Room, in *Briſtol*; *John Weſley*, *Charles Weſley*, *John Hodges*, *Thomas Richards*, *Samuel Larwood*, *Thomas Myrick*, *Richard Moſs*, *John Slocombe*, *Herbert Jenkins*, and *Marmaduke Gwynne*:

It was propoſed to review the minutes of the laſt conference with regard to juſtification. And it was aſked.

Q. 1. How comes what is written on this ſubject to be ſo intricate and obſcure? Is this obſcurity from the nature of the thing itſelf? Or, from the fault or weakneſs of thoſe who have generally treated of it?

A. We apprehend this obſcurity does not ariſe from the nature of the ſubject: but, perhaps, partly from hence, that the devil peculiarly labours to perplex a ſubject of the greateſt importance: and partly from the extreme warmth of moſt writers who have treated of it.

Q. 2. We affirm faith, in Chriſt is the ſole condition of juſtification. But does not repentance go before that faith? Yea, and (ſuppoſing there be opportunity for them) fruits or works meet for repentance?

A. Without doubt they do.

3. How

Q. 3. How then can we deny them to be *conditions* of juſtification? Is not this a mere ſtriſe of words? But is it worth while to continue a diſpute on the term *condition?*

A. It ſeems not, though it has been grievouſly abuſed. But ſo the abuſe ceaſe, let the uſe remain.

Q. 4. Shall we read over together Mr. *Baxter*'s aphoriſms concerning juſtification?

A. By all means: which were accordingly read. And it was deſired, that each perſon preſent would in the afternoon conſult the ſcriptures cited therein, and bring what objections might occur the next morning.

FRIDAY, *Auguſt* 2. *The* queſtion *was propoſed.*

Q. 1. IS a ſenſe of God's pardoning love abſolutely neceſſary to our being in his favour? Or may there be ſome exempt caſes?

A. We dare not ſay, there are not.

Q. 2. Is it neceſſary to inward and outward holineſs?

A. We incline to think it is.

Q. 3. Is it indiſpenſably neceſſary to final ſalvation? Suppoſe in a *Papiſt?* Or, a *Quaker?* Or, in general, among thoſe who never heard it preached?

A. Love hopeth all things. We know not how far any of theſe may fall under the caſe of invincible ignorance.

Q. 4. But what can we ſay of one of our own ſociety, who dies without it, as *J. W.* at *London?*

A. It may be an exempt caſe (if the fact was really ſo.) But we determine nothing. We leave his ſoul in the hands of him that made it.

Q. 5. Does a man believe any longer than he ſees a reconciled God?

A. We conceive not. But we allow there may be infinite degrees in ſeeing God: even as many as there are between him who ſees the ſun, when it ſhines on his eye-lids cloſed, and him who ſtands with his eyes wide open, in the full blaze of his beams.

Q. 6. Does a man believe any longer than he loves God.

A. In no wiſe. For neither circumciſion or uncircumciſion avails, without faith working by love.

Q. 7. Have we duly conſidered the caſe of *Cornelius?* Was not he in the favour of God, *when his prayers and alms came up for a memorial before God? i. e.* Before he believed in Chriſt?

A. It does ſeem that he was, in ſome degree. But we ſpeak not of thoſe who have not heard the goſpel.

Q. 8. But were thoſe works of his, *ſp lendid ſins?*

A. No; nor were they *done without the grace of* Chriſt.

* *Q.* 9. How then can we maintain, that all works done before we have a ſenſe of the pardoning

doning love of God, are ſin? And, as ſuch, an abomination to him?

A. The works of him who has heard the goſpel, and does not believe, are not done as God hath *willed and commanded them to be done.* And yet we know not how to ſay, that they are an abomination to the Lord in him who feareth God, and from that principle, does the beſt he can.

Q. 10. Seeing there is ſo much difficulty in this ſubject, can we deal too tenderly with them that oppoſe us?

A. We cannot; unleſs we were to give up any part of the truth of God.

Q. 11. Is a believer *conſtrained* to obey God?

A. At firſt he often is The love of Chriſt conſtraineth him. After this, he *may* obey, or he may not; no conſtraint being laid upon him.

Q. 12. * Can faith be loſt, but through diſobedience?

A. It cannot. A believer firſt inwardly diſobeys, inclines to ſin with his heart: then his intercourſe with God is cut off, *i. e.* His faith is loſt. And after this, he may fall into outward ſin, being now weak, and like another man.

Q. 13. How can ſuch an one recover faith?

A. By repenting and doing the firſt works, *Rev.* ii. 5.

Q. 14. Whence is it that ſo great a majority of thoſe who believe fall more or leſs into doubt or fear?

A. Chiefly from their own ignorance or unfaithfulneſs: often from their not watching unto prayer: perhaps ſometimes from ſome defect, or want of the power of God in the preaching they hear.

Q. 15. Is there not a defect in us? Do we preach as we did at firſt? Have we not changed our doctrines?

A. 1. At firſt we preached almoſt wholly to unbelievers. To thoſe therefore we ſpake almoſt continually, of remiſſion of ſins through the death of Chriſt, and the nature of faith in his blood. And ſo we do ſtill, among thoſe who need to be taught the firſt elements of the goſpel of Chriſt:

2. But thoſe in whom the foundation is already laid, we exhort to go on to perfection: which we did not ſee ſo clearly at firſt; although we occaſionally ſpoke of it from the beginning.

3. Yet we now preach, and that continually, faith in Chriſt, as the prophet, prieſt and king, at leaſt, as clearly, as ſtrongly, and as fully as we did ſix years ago.

Q. 16. Do we not diſcourage viſions and dreams too much? As if we condemned them *toto genere.*

A. We do not intend to do this. We neither diſcourage nor encourage them. We learn from *Acts* ii. 19, *&c.* to expect ſomething of this kind *in the laſt days.* And we cannot deny, that ſaving faith is often given in dreams or viſions of the night: which faith we account neither better nor worſe, than if it came by any other means.

Q. 17. Do not ſome of our aſſiſtants preach

too

too much of the wrath, and too little of the love of God?

A. We fear they have leaned to that extreme; and hence some of their hearers may have loſt the joy of faith.

Q. 18. Need we ever preach the terrors of the Lord to thoſe who know they are accepted of him?

A. No: it is folly ſo to do: for love is to them the ſtrongeſt of all motives.

Q. 19. Do we ordinarily repreſent a juſtified ſtate ſo great and happy as it is?

A. Perhaps not. A believer walking in the light, is inexpreſſibly great and happy.

Q. 20. Should we not have a care of depreciating juſtification, in order to exalt the ſtate of full ſanctification?

A. Undoubtedly we ſhould beware of this: for one may inſenſibly ſlide into it.

Q. 21. How ſhall we effectually avoid it?

A. When we are going to ſpeak of entire ſanctification, let us firſt deſcribe the bleſſings of a juſtified ſtate, as ſtrongly as poſſible.

Q. 22. Does not the truth of the goſpel lie very near both to *Calviniſm* and *Antinomianiſm?*

A. Indeed it does: as it were, within a hair's breadth. So that it is altogether fooliſh and ſinful, becauſe we do not quite agree, either with one or the other, to run from them as far as ever we can.

* *Q.* 23. Where-

* *Q.* 23. Wherein may we come to the very edge of *Calviniſm?*

A. In aſcribing all good to the free grace of God: 2. In denying all natural free will, and all power antecedent to grace; and 3. In excluding all merit from man; even for what he has or does by the grace of God.

Q. 24. Wherein may we come to the edge of *Antinomianiſm?*

A. 1. In exalting the merits and love of Chriſt. 2. In rejoicing evermore.

Q. 25. Does faith ſuperſede (ſet aſide the neceſſity of) holineſs or good works?

A. In no wiſe. So far from it, that it implies both, as a cauſe does its effects.

About ten, we began to ſpeak of ſanctification: with regard to which, it was inquired;

Q. 1. WHEN does inward ſanctification begin?

A. In the moment we are juſtified. The ſeed of every virtue is then ſown in the ſoul. From that time the believer gradually dies to ſin, and grows in grace. Yet ſin remains in him; yea, the ſeed of all ſin, till he is ſanctified throughout in ſpirit, ſoul and body.

Q. 2. What will become of a Heathen? A *Papiſt*, a church of *England* man? If he dies without being thus ſanctified?

A. He

A. He cannot ſee the Lord. But none who ſeeks it ſincerely, ſhall or can die without it: though poſſibly he may not attain it, till the very article of death?

Q. 3. Is it ordinarily given till a little before death?

A. It is not, to thoſe that expect it no ſooner, nor conſequently aſk for it, at leaſt, not in faith.

Q. 4. But ought we to expect it ſooner?

A. Why not? For although we grant, 1. That the generality of believers, whom we have hitherto known, were not ſo ſanctified till near death. 2. That few of thoſe to whom St. *Paul* wrote his epiſtles were ſo at the time he wrote. 3. Nor he himſelf at the time of writing his former epiſtles. Yet this does not prove, that we may not to-day.

Q. 5. But would not one who was thus ſanctified be incapable of worldly buſineſs?

A. He would be far more capable of it than ever, as going through all without diſtraction.

Q. 6. Would he be capable of marriage?

A. Why ſhould he not?

Q. 7. Should we not beware of bearing hard on thoſe who think they have attained?

A. We ſhould. And the rather, becauſe if they are faithful to the grace they have received, they are in no danger of periſhing at laſt. No, not even if they remain in *luminous faith*, (as ſome term it) for many months or years: perhaps

haps till within a little time of their ſpirits returning to God.

* *Q.* 8. In what manner ſhould we preach entire ſanctification?

A. Scarce at all to thoſe who are not preſſing forward. To thoſe who are, always by way of promiſe: always drawing, rather than driving.

Q. 9. How ſhould we wait for the fulfilling of this promiſe?

A. In univerſal obedience: in keeping all the commandments, in denying ourſelves, and taking up our croſs daily. Theſe are the general means which God hath ordained for our receiving his ſanctifying grace. The particular are, prayer, ſearching the ſcripture, communicating and faſting.

Converſation the Third.

TUESDAY, *May* 13, 1746.

THE following perſons being met at the New Room in *Briſtol: John Weſley, Charles Weſley, John Hodges, Jonathan Reeves, Thomas Maxfield, Thomas Weſtell,* and *Thomas Willis,* It was inquired:

Q. 1. Can an unbeliever (whatever he be in other reſpects) challenge any thing of God's juſtice?

A. Abſolutely nothing but hell. And this is a point which we cannot too much inſiſt on.

Q. 2. Do

Q. 2. Do we empty men of their own righteouſneſs, as we did at firſt? Do we ſufficiently labour, when they begin to be convinced of ſin, to take away all they lean upon? Should we not then endeavour with all our might to overturn their falſe foundations?

A. This was at firſt one of our principal points. And it ought to be ſo ſtill. For, till all other foundations are overturned, they cannot build upon Chriſt?

Q. 3. Did we not *then* purpoſely throw them into convictions? Into ſtrong ſorrow and fear? Nay, did we not ſtrive to make them inconſolable? Refuſing to be comforted?

A. We did. And ſo we ſhould do ſtill. For the ſtronger the conviction, the ſpeedier is the deliverance. And none ſo ſoon receive the peace of God, as thoſe who ſteadily refuſe all other comfort.

Q. 4. Let us conſider a particular caſe. Was you, *Jonathan Reeves*, before you received the peace of God, convinced, that notwithſtanding all you did, or could do, you was in a ſtate of damnation?

J. R. I was convinced of it, as fully as that I am now alive.

A. 5. Are you ſure that conviction was from God?

J. R. I can have no doubt but it was?

Q. 6. What do you mean by a ſtate of damnation?

J. R.

J. R. A ſtate, wherein if a man dies he periſheth for ever.

Q. 7. How did that conviction end?

J. R. I had firſt a ſtrong hope that God *would* deliver me: and this brought a degree of peace. But I had not that ſolid peace of God, till Chriſt was revealed in me.

Q. 8. But is not ſuch a truſt in the love of God, tho' it be as yet without a diſtinct ſight of God, reconciled to me thro' Chriſt Jeſus, a low degree of juſtifying faith?

A. It is an earneſt of it. But this abides, for a ſhort time only: nor is this the proper Chriſtian faith.

Q. 9. By what faith were the apoſtles clean, before Chriſt died?

A. By ſuch a faith as this; by a *Jewiſh* faith. For *the Holy Ghoſt was not then given.*

Q. 10. Of whom then do you underſtand thoſe words—(*Iſa.* l. 10.) *Who is there among you that feareth the Lord? That obeyeth the voice of his ſervant, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light?*

A. Of a believer under the *Jewiſh* diſpenſation: one in whoſe heart God hath not yet ſhined, to give him the light of the glorious love of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. 11. Who is a *Jew* (inwardly)?

A. A *ſervant* of God: one who ſincerely obeys him out of fear. Whereas a Chriſtian (inwardly) is a *child* of God; one who ſincerely obeys

obeys him out of love. But was not you ſincere before Chriſt was revealed in you ?

J. R. It ſeemed to me that I was in ſome meaſure.

Q. 12. What is ſincerity ?

A. Willingneſs to know and do the whole will of God. The loweſt ſpecies thereof ſeems to be *faithfulneſs in that which is little.*

* *Q.* 13. Has God any regard to man's ſincerity ?

A. So far, that no man in any ſtate can poſſibly pleaſe God without it : neither indeed in any moment wherein he is not ſincere.

Q. 14. But can it be conceived that God has any regard to the ſincerity of an unbeliever ?

A. Yes, ſo much, that if he perſevere therein, God will infallibly give him faith.

Q. 15. What regard may we conceive him to have, to the ſincerity of a believer ?

A. So much, that in every ſincere believer he fulfils all the great and precious promiſes.

Q. 16. Whom do you term a *ſincere believer ?*

A. One that walks in the light, as God is in the light.

Q. 18. Is ſincerity the ſame with a *ſingle eye ?*

A. Not altogether. The latter refers to our intention : the former to our will or deſires.

Q. 18. Is it not all in all ?

A. All will follow perſevering ſincerity. God gives every thing with it ; nothing without it.

* *Q.* 19. Are

* *Q.* 19. Are not then ſincerity and faith equivalent terms?

A. By no means. It is at leaſt as nearly related to works as it is to faith. For example; who is ſincere before he believes? He that then does all he can: he that, according to the power he has received, brings forth *fruits meet for repentance.* Who is ſincere after he believes: he that, from a ſenſe of God's love, is zealous of all good works.

Q. 20. Is not ſincerity what St. *Paul* terms a willing mind? ἡ προθυμία? 2 *Cor.* viii. 12.

A. Yes: if that word be taken in a general ſenſe. For it is a conſtant diſpoſition to uſe all the grace given.

* *Q.* 21. But do we not then ſet ſincerity on a level with faith?

A. No. For we allow a man may be ſincere, and not be juſtified, as he may be penitent, and not be juſtified: (not as yet) but he cannot have faith, and not be juſtified. The very moment he believes he is juſtified.

Q. 22. But do we not give up faith, and put ſincerity in its place, as the condition of our acceptance with God?

A. We believe it is one condition of our acceptance, as repentance likewiſe is. And we believe it a condition of our continuing in a ſtate of acceptance. Yet we do not put it in the place of faith. It is by faith the merits of Chriſt are applied to my ſoul. But if I am not ſincere, they are not applied.

Q. 23. Is

Q. 23. Is not this that *going about to eſtabliſh your own righteouſneſs*, whereof St. *Paul* ſpeaks, *Rom.* x. 4?

A. St. *Paul* there manifeſtly ſpeaks of unbelievers, who ſought to be accepted for the ſake of their own righteouſneſs. We do not ſeek to be accepted for the ſake of our ſincerity; but through the merits of Chriſt alone. Indeed, ſo long as any man believes, he cannot go about (in St. *Paul*'s ſenſe) to *eſtabliſh his own righteouſneſs*.

* *Q.* 24. But do you conſider, that we are under the covenant of grace? And that the covenant of works is now aboliſhed?

A. All mankind were under the covenant of grace, from the very hour that the original promiſe was made. If by the covenant of works you mean, that of unſinning obedience made with *Adam* before the fall: no man, but *Adam*, was ever under the covenant: for it was aboliſhed before *Cain* was born. Yet it is not ſo aboliſhed, but that it will ſtand, in a meaſure, even to the end of the world, *i. e.* If we *do this*, we ſhall live; if not, we ſhall die eternally: if we do well, we ſhall live with God in glory: if evil, we ſhall die the ſecond death. For every man ſhall be judged in that day, and rewarded *according to his works*.

Q. 25. What means then, *To him that believeth his faith is counted for righteouſneſs?*

A. That God forgives him that is unrighteous as ſoon as he believes, accepting his faith inſtead of

of perfect righteousness. But then observe, universal righteousness follows, though it did not precede faith.

Q. 26. But is faith thus *counted to us for righteousness*, at whatsoever time we believe?

A. Yes. In whatsoever moment we believe, all our past sins vanish away. They are as though they had never been, and we stand clear in the sight of God.

TUESDAY, *Ten o'Clock.*

MR. *Taylor* of *Quinton*, and *T. Glascot*, being added, it was inquired,

Q. 1. Are not the assurance of faith, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and the revelation of Christ in us, terms nearly of the same import?

A. He that denies one of them, must deny all; they are so closely connected together.

Q. 2. Are they ordinarily, where the pure gospel is preached, essential to our acceptance?

A. Undoubtedly they are; and as such, to be insisted on, in the strongest terms.

* *Q.* 3. Is not the whole dispute of salvation by faith or by works, a mere *strife of words?*

A. In asserting salvation by faith, we mean this; 1. That pardon, (salvation begun) is received by faith, producing works. 2. That holiness (salvation continued) is faith working by love: 3. That

3. That heaven (ſalvation finiſhed) is the reward of this faith.

If you who aſſert ſalvation by works, or by faith and works, mean the ſame thing (underſtanding by faith, the revelation of Chriſt in us, by ſalvation, pardon, holineſs, glory) we will not ſtrive with you at all. If you do not, this is not a *ſtrife of words:* but the very vitals, the eſſence of Chriſtianity is the thing in queſtion.

Q. 4. Wherein does our doctrine now differ from that we preached when at *Oxford?*

A. Chiefly in theſe two points: 1. We then knew nothing of that righteouſneſs of faith, in juſtification; nor 2. Of the nature of faith itſelf, as implying conſciouſneſs of pardon.

Q. 5. May not ſome degree of the love of God, go before a diſtinct ſenſe of juſtification?

A. We believe it may.

Q. 6. Can any degree of ſanctification or holineſs?

A. Many degrees of outward holineſs may: yea, and ſome degree of meekneſs, and ſeveral other tempers which would be branches of Chriſtian holineſs, but that they do not ſpring from Chriſtian principles. For the abiding love of God cannot ſpring, but from faith in a pardoning God. And no true Chriſtian holineſs can exiſt, without that love of God for its foundation.

Q. 7. Is every man, as ſoon as he believes, a new creature, ſanctified, pure in heart? Has he then

then a new heart? Does Chriſt dwell therein? And is he a temple of the Holy Ghoſt?

A. All theſe things may be affirmed of every believer, in a true ſenſe. Let us not therefore contradict thoſe who maintain it. Why ſhould we contend about words?

Converſation the Fourth.

TUESDAY, *June* 16, 1747.

THE following perſons being met at the Foundery:

John Weſley, *Charles Weſley*, and *Charles Manning*, vicar of *Hayes*: *Richard Thomas Bateman*, rector of St. *Bartholomew*'s the Great, *Henry Piers*, *Howell Harris*, and *Thomas Hardwick*, It was inquired,

Q. 1. Is juſtifying faith, a divine aſſurance, that Chriſt loved *me* and gave himſelf for *me*?

A. We believe it is.

Q. 2. What is the judgment of moſt of the ſerious diſſenters concerning this?

A. They generally allow, that many believers have ſuch an aſſurance: And

That it is to be deſired and prayed for by all:

But then they affirm,

That this is the higheſt ſpecies, or degree of faith:

That it is not the common privilege of believers:

lievers: consequently, they deny that this is justifying faith, or necessarily implied therein.

Q. 3. And are there not strong reasons for their opinion? For instance: If the true believers of old had not this assurance, then it is not necessarily implied in justifying faith:

But the true believers of old had not this assurance.

A. David, and many more of the believers of old, undeniably had this assurance. But even if the *Jews* had it not, it would not follow, that this is not implied in *Christian* faith.

Q. 4. But do you not know, that the apostles themselves had it not, till after the day of *Pentecost?*

A. The apostles themselves had not the proper Christian faith, till after the day of *Pentecost.*

Q. 5. But were not those Christian believers, in the proper sense, to whom St. *John* wrote his first epistle? Yet to these he says, chap. v. ver. 13. *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

A. This does not prove, that they did not know they had eternal life, any more than that they did not believe. His plain meaning is, "I have written unto you, that you may be the more established in the faith." Therefore it does not follow from hence, that they had not

this assurance: but only, that there are degrees therein.

Q. 6. But were not the *Thessalonians* true believers? Yet they had not this assurance: they had only a *good hope*. 2 *Thess.* ii. 16.

A. The text you refer to, runs thus: *Now our* Lord Jesus Christ *himself, and* God, *even our Father, which hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace: comfort your hearts and establish you, in every good word and work.* This *good hope* does not exclude, but necessarily implies a strong assurance of the love of God.

Q. 7. But does not St. *Paul* say even of himself, 1 *Cor.* iv. 4. *I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified?*

A. He does not say of himself here, that he was not justified: or, that he did not know it: but only, that though he had a conscience void of offence, yet this did not justify him before God. And must not every believer say the same? This therefore is wide of the point.

Q. 8. But does he not disclaim any such assurance in those words, 1 *Cor.* i. 3. *I was with you in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling.*

A. By no means. For these words do not imply any fear either of death or hell. They express only a deep sense of his utter insufficiency for the great work wherein he was engaged.

Q. 9. However, does he not exclude Christians in general from such an assurance, when he bids them

them *work out* their *ſalvation with fear and trembling? Phil.* ii. 12.

A. No more than from love; which is always joined with filial fear and reverential trembling.

And the ſame anſwer is applicable to all thoſe texts which exhort a believer to fear.

Q. 10. But does not matter of fact prove, that juſtifying faith does not neceſſarily imply aſſurance? For can you believe that ſuch a perſon as *J. A.* or *E. V.* who have ſo much integrity, zeal, and fear of God, and walk ſo unblameably in all things, is void of juſtifying faith? Can you ſuppoſe ſuch as theſe to be under the wrath and under the curſe of God? Eſpecially if you add to this, that they are continually longing, ſtriving, praying for the aſſurance which they have not?

A. This contains the very ſtrength of the cauſe: and inclines us to think, that ſome of theſe may be exempt caſes. But however that be, we anſwer:

1. It is dangerous to ground a general doctrine on a few particular experiments.

2. Men may have many good tempers, and a blameleſs life (ſpeaking in a looſe ſenſe), by nature and habit, with preventing grace; and yet not have faith and the love of God.

3. It is ſcarce poſſible for us to know all the circumſtances relating to ſuch perſons, ſo as to judge certainly concerning them.

4. But this we know, If Chriſt is not revealed in them, they are not yet Chriſtian believers.

Q. 11. But what will become of them then, fuppofe they die in this ſtate?

A. That is a fuppoſition not to be made.

They cannot die in this ſtate. They muſt go backward or forward. If they continue to ſeek, they will ſurely find righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt. We are confirmed in this belief by the many inſtances we have ſeen, of ſuch as theſe finding peace at the laſt hour. And it is not impoſſible, but others may then be made partakers of like precious faith, and yet go hence without giving any outward proof of the change which God hath wrought.

Converſation the Fifth.

WEDNESDAY, 17.

Q. 1. HOW much is allowed by our brethren who differ from us, with regard to entire ſanctification?

A. They grant, 1. That every one muſt be entirely ſanctified, in the article of death:

2. That till then, a believer daily grows in grace, comes nearer and nearer to perfection:

3. That we ought to be continually preſſing after this and to exhort all others ſo to do.

Q. 2. What do we allow them?

A. We grant, 1. That many of thoſe who have died in the faith, yea, the greater part of thoſe we have known, were not ſanctified throughout, not

not made perfect in love, till a little before death:

2. That the term, "sanctified," is continually applied by St. *Paul*, to all that were justified, were true believers:

3. That by this term alone, he rarely (if ever) means, saved from all sin:

4. That consequently, it is not proper to use it in this sense, without adding the word "wholly, entirely," or the like:

5. That the inspired writers almost continually speak of or to those who are justified; but very rarely, either of or to those, who were wholly sanctified:

6. That consequently, it behoves us to speak in public almost continually of the state of justification: but more rarely, in full and explicit terms, concerning entire sanctification.

Q. 3. What then is the point wherein we divide?

A. It is this: Whether we should expect to be saved from all sin, before the article of death?

Q. 4. Is there any clear scripture *promise* of this? That God will save us from *all* sin?

A. There is. *Psalm* cxxx. 8. *He shall redeem Israel from* all *his sins.*

This is more largely expressed in the prophesy of *Ezekiel: Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from* all *your filthiness and from* all *your idols will I cleanse you—I will also save you from* all *your uncleannesses*, chap.

xxxvi. ver. 25. 29. No promiſe can be more clear. And to this the apoſtle plainly refers in that exhortation, *Having theſe promiſes, let us cleanſe ourſelves, from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.* 2 *Cor.* vii. 1. Equally clear and expreſs is that antient promiſe, *The Lord thy God will circumciſe thine heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy ſoul.* Deut. xxx. 6.

Q. 5. But does any *aſſertion* anſwerable to this, occur in the new Teſtament?

A. There does, and that laid down in the plaineſt terms. So St. *John* iii. 8. *For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil.* The works of the devil, without any limitation or reſtriction: but all ſin is the work of the devil. Parallel to which is that aſſertion of St. *Paul*, Eph. v. 25. 27. *Chriſt loved the church and gave himſelf for it—that he might preſent it to himſelf a glorious church, not having ſpot or wrinkle or any ſuch thing, but that it ſhould be holy and without blemiſh.*

And to the ſame effect is his aſſertion in the 8th of the *Romans*, (ver. 3, 4.) *God ſent his Son* —that the *righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us, walking not after the fleſh but after the Spirit.*

Q. 6. Does the new Teſtament afford any farther

farther ground, for expecting to be saved from all sin?

A. Undoubtedly it does, both in those prayers and commands which are equivalent to the strongest assertions.

Q. 7. What prayers do you mean?

A. Prayers for entire sanctification; which were there no such thing, would be mere mockery of God. Such, in particular, are 1. *Deliver us from evil*; or rather, *from the evil one.* Now when this is done, when we are delivered from all evil, there can be no sin remaining. 2. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.* John xvii. 20, 21. 23.

3. *I bow my knees unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—that he would grant you—that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height: and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that he might be filled with all the fulness of God.* Eph. iii. 14. 16—19. 4. *The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray God, your whole spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Thess. v. 23.

Q. 8. What command is there to the same effect?

A. 1. *Be ye perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* Matt. vi. ult.

2. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.* Matt. xxii. 37. But if the love of God fill all the heart, there can be no sin there.

Q. 9. But how does it appear, that this is to be done before the article of death?

A. First, from the very nature of a command, which is not given to the dead, but to the living.

Therefore, *Thou shalt love God with all thy heart*, cannot mean, Thou shalt do this when thou dieſt, but while thou liveſt.

Secondly, from expreſs texts of ſcripture:

1. *The grace of God that bringeth ſalvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that having renounced* (ἀπειπάμενοι) *ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world: looking for——the glorious appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from* all *iniquity; and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* Tit. ii. 11—14.

2. *He hath raiſed up an horn of ſalvation for us—to perform the mercy promiſed to our fathers; the oath which he ſware to our father* Abraham, *that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, ſhould ſerve him without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him, all the days of our life.* Luke i. ver. 69, &c.

Q. 10. Is

Q. 10. Is there any example in ſcripture of perſons who had attained to this?

A. Yes. St. *John* and all thoſe of whom he ſays in his firſt epiſtle, chap. iv. ver. 17. *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, becauſe as he is, ſo are we in this world.*

Q. 11. But why are there not more examples of this kind, recorded in the new Teſtament?

A. It does not become us to be peremptory in this matter. One reaſon might poſſibly be, Becauſe the apoſtles wrote to the church, while it was in a ſtate of infancy. Therefore they might mention ſuch perſons the more ſparingly, leaſt they ſhould give ſtrong meat to babes.

Q. 12. Can you ſhew one ſuch example now? Where is he that is thus perfect?

A. To ſome who make this enquiry, one might anſwer, If I knew one here, I would not tell *you*. For you do not enquire out of love. You are like *Herod*. You only ſeek the young child, to ſlay it.

But more directly we anſwer, There are numberleſs reaſons, why there ſhould be few (if any indiſputable) examples. What inconveniences would this bring on the perſon himſelf, ſet as a mark for all to ſhoot at? What a temptation would it be to others, not only to men who knew not God, but to believers themſelves? How hardly would they refrain from idolizing ſuch a perſon? And yet, how unprofitable to

gain-sayers? For if they hear not *Moses* and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Q. 13. Suppose one had attained to this, would you advise him to speak of it?

A. Not to them who know not God. It would only provoke them to contradict and blaspheme: nor to any without some particular reason, without some particular good in view. And then they should have an especial care, to avoid all appearance of boasting.

Q. 14. Is it a sin, not to believe those who say they have attained?

A. By no means, even though they said true. We ought not hastily to believe, but to suspend our judgment, till we have full and strong proof.

Q. 15. But are we not apt to have a secret distaste to any who say, They are saved from all sin?

A. It is very possible we may; and that on several grounds: partly from a concern for the honour of God, and the good of souls who may be hurt, yea, or turned out of the way, if these are not what they profess: partly from a kind of implicit envy at those who speak of higher attainments than our own: and partly from our slowness and unreadiness of heart, to believe the works of God.

Q. 16. Does not the hastily preaching perfection tend

tend to bring believers into a kind of bondage, or ſlaviſh fear?

A. It does. Therefore we ſhould always place it in the moſt amiable light, ſo that it may excite only hope, joy, and deſire.

Q. 17. Why may we not continue in the joy of faith even till we are made perfect?

A. Why indeed? Since holy grief does not quench this joy: ſince even while we are under the croſs, while we deeply partake of the ſufferings of Chriſt, we may rejoice with joy unſpeakable.

Q. 18. Do we not diſcourage believers from rejoicing evermore?

A. We ought not ſo to do. Let them all their life long, rejoice unto God, ſo it be with reverence. And even if lightneſs or pride ſhould mix with their joy, let us not ſtrike at the joy itſelf (this is the gift of God) but at that lightneſs or pride, that the evil may ceaſe and the good remain.

Q. 19. Ought we to be anxiouſly careful about perfection? Leaſt we ſhould die before we have attained?

A. In no wife. We ought to be thus *careful for nothing*, neither ſpiritual nor temporal.

Q. 20. But ought we not to be *troubled*, on account of the ſinful nature which ſtill remains in us?

A. It is good for us to have a deep ſenſe of this, and to be much aſhamed before the Lord. But

this ſhould only incite us, the more earneſtly to turn unto Chriſt every moment, and to draw light, and life, and ſtrength from him, that we may go on, conquering and to conquer. And therefore, when the ſenſe of our ſin moſt abounds, the ſenſe of his love ſhould much more abound.

Q. 21. Will our joy or our trouble increaſe, as we grow in grace?

A. Perhaps both. But without doubt our joy in the Lord will increaſe as our love increaſes.

Q. 22. Is not the teaching believers to be continually poring upon their inbred ſin, the ready way to make them forget that they were purged from their former ſins?

A. We find by experience, it is; or to make them under-value, and account it a little thing: whereas indeed (though there are ſtill greater gifts behind) this is inexpreſſibly great and glorious.

MINUTES

MINUTES

OF SEVERAL

CONVERSATIONS,

Between the Reverend Meſſieurs JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY, and Others.

JUNE 25, 1744, &c.

IT is deſired, that all things be conſidered as in the immediate preſence of God:

That we may meet with a ſingle eye, and as little children, who have every thing to learn:

That every point which is propoſed, may be examined to the foundation:

That every perſon may ſpeak freely whatever is in his heart:

And that every queſtion which may ariſe, ſhould

ſhould be throughly debated and ſettled. Mean time let us all pray for a willingneſs to receive light, to know of every doctrine, whether it be of God.

Q. 1. How may the time of this conference be made more eminently a time of watching unto prayer?

A. 1. While we are converſing, let us have an eſpecial care, to ſet God always before us:

2. In the intermediate hours, let us viſit none but the ſick, and ſpend all the time that remains in retirement:

3. Let us therein give ourſelves to prayer for one another, and for a bleſſing on this our labour.

Q. 2. How far does each of us agree to ſubmit to the judgment of the majority?

A. In ſpeculative things each can only ſubmit, ſo far as his judgment ſhall be convinced:

In every practical point each will ſubmit, ſo far as he can without wounding his conſcience.

Q. 3. Can a Chriſtian ſubmit any farther than this, to any man, or number of men upon earth?

A. It is plain he cannot, either to biſhop, convocation or general council. And this is that grand principle of private judgment, on which all the reformers proceeded; "Every "man muſt judge for himſelf; becauſe every "man muſt give an account of himſelf to God."

**Q.* 4. What may we reaſonably expect to be God's

God's design in raising up the preachers called *Methodists?*

A. To reform the nation, particularly the church; to spread scriptural holiness over the land.

Q. 5. What was the rise of *Methodism*, so called?

A. In 1729, two young men reading the bible, saw they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737 they saw, holiness comes by faith. They saw likewise, that men are justified before they are sanctified: but still holiness was their point.

God then thrust them out, utterly against their will, to raise an holy people. When Satan could no otherwise hinder this, he threw *Calvinism* in the way; and then *Antinomianism*, which strikes directly at the root of all holiness.

Then many of the *Methodists* growing *rich*, became lovers of the present world. Next they married unawakened or half-awakened *wives*, and conversed with their relations. Hence worldly *prudence*, *maxims*, *customs*, crept back upon them, producing more and more *conformity to the world.*

Hence followed gross neglect of *relative duties*, especially *education* of children. And this is not easily cured by the preachers. Either they have not *light*, or not *weight* enough. But the want of both may in some measure be supplied, by publicly

publicly reading *the ſermons* every where, particularly the fourth volume.

Q. 6. Is it adviſable to preach in as many places as we can, without forming any ſocieties?

A. By no means: we have made the trial in various places; and that for a conſiderable time. But all the ſeed has fallen as by the way-ſide: there is ſcarce any fruit of it remaining.

Q. 7. But what particular inconveniencies do you obſerve, where ſocieties are not formed?

A. Theſe among others; 1. The preachers cannot give proper inſtructions and exhortations to thoſe that are convinced of ſin: 2. They cannot watch over one another in love; nor, 3. Can the believers bear one another's burdens, and build up each other in faith and holineſs.

Q. 8. Where ſhould we endeavour to preach moſt?

A. 1. Where we (Clergymen) are permitted to preach in a church; 2. Where there is the greateſt number of quiet and willing hearers; 3. Where there is moſt fruit.

Q. 9. Is field-preaching then unlawful?

A. We conceive not. We do not know that it is contrary to any law either of God or man.

Q. 10. Have we not uſed it too ſparingly?

A. It ſeems we have: 1. Becauſe our call is, To ſave that which is loſt. Now we cannot expect ſuch to ſeek *us*. Therefore we ſhould go and ſeek *them*. 2. Becauſe we are particularly called, by *going into the highways and hedges* (which

(which none elſe will) *to compel them to come in.* 3. Becauſe that reaſon againſt it is not good. "The houſe will hold all that come." The houſe may hold all that come to the houſe, but not all that *would come* to the field.

The greateſt hindrances to this you are to expect from the rich, or cowardly, or lazy *Methodiſts.* But regard them not, neither ſtewards, leaders, nor people. Whenever the weather will permit, go out in God's name into the moſt public places, and call all to *repent, and believe the goſpel*; every Sunday in particular: eſpecially in the old ſocieties, leaſt they ſettle upon their lees.

Q. 11. Ought we not diligently to obſerve, in what places God is pleaſed at any time to pour out his Spirit more abundantly?

A. We ought, and at that time to ſend more labourers than uſual into that part of the harveſt.

Q. 12. What is a ſufficient call to a new place?

A. 1. An invitation from a ſerious man, fearing God, who has an houſe to receive us: 2. A probability of doing more good by going thither, than by ſtaying longer where we are.

Q. 13. How often ſhall we permit ſtrangers to be preſent, at the meeting of the ſociety?

A. Let every other meeting of the ſociety, in every place, be ſtrictly private; no one ſtranger being admitted, on any account or pretence whatſoever. On the other nights we may admit them with caution; but not the ſame perſons

above

above twice or thrice. In order to this, see that all in every place shew their tickets before they come in. If the stewards and leaders are not exact and impartial herein, employ others who have more resolution.

Q. 14. May a relapser into gross sin, confessing his fault, be re-admitted into the society?

A. Not as a member, till after three months: but he may be permitted to stay as a stranger.

Q. 15. How may the leaders of classes be made more useful?

A. 1. Let each of them be diligently examined concerning his method of meeting a class.

2. Let us recommend to all the following directions;

1. Let each leader carefully inquire, how every soul in his class prospers? Not only, how each person observes the outward rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God.

2. Let the leaders converse with all the preachers, as frequently and as freely as possible.

3. Let every leader come into the room on *Tuesday*, as soon as the service is ended, and then sit down, and commune with God in his heart till the preacher comes in.

4. Let no leaders go out till the preacher goes.

5. Let every leader bring a note of every sick person in his class.

16. Can any thing farther be done, in order to make the meeting of the classes lively and profitable?

A. 1. Let

A. 1. Let the leaders frequently meet each other's claſſes.

2. Let us obſerve, which leaders are moſt uſeful to thoſe under their care. And let theſe meet the other claſſes as often as poſſible.

3. Frequently making new leaders.

Q. 17. How can we farther aſſiſt thoſe under our care?

A. 1. By cloſely examining them at each viſitation:

2. By meeting the married men and women together, on the firſt *Sunday*, after the viſitation; the ſingle men and women apart, on the two following.

3. By inſtructing them at their own houſes.

What unſpeakable need is there of this? The world ſay, "The Methodiſts are no better than other people." This is not true. Yet it is nearer the truth, than we are willing to imagine.

For, 1. Perſonal-religion, either toward God or man, is amazingly ſuperficial among us.

I can but juſt touch on a few generals. How little faith is there among us? How little communion with God? How little living in heaven, walking in eternity, deadneſs to every creature? How much love of the word, deſire of pleaſure, of eaſe, of praiſe, of getting money?

How little brotherly-love? What continual judging one another? What goſſipping, evil-ſpeaking, tale-bearing? What want of moral honeſty? To inſtance only in a few particulars:

What

What ſervants, journeymen, labourers, carpenters, bricklayers, do as they would be done by? Which of them does as much work as he can? Set him down for a knave that does not.

Who does as he would be done by, in buying and ſelling, particularly in ſelling horſes? Write him knave that does not. And the methodiſt-knave is the worſt of all knaves.

2. Family religion is ſhamefully wanting, and almoſt in every branch.

And the Methodiſts in general will be little better, till we take quite another courſe with them. For what avails public *preaching alone*, though we could preach like angels?

I heard Dr. *Lupton* ſay, my father, viſiting one of his pariſhioners, who had never miſſed going to church for forty years, then lying on his death-bed, aſked him, "*Thomas*, where do you think your ſoul will go?" "Soul! ſoul!" ſaid *Thomas*: "Yes: do not you know what your ſoul is?" "Aye ſurely," ſaid he: "Why, it is a little bone in the back, that lives longer than the reſt of the body." So much *Thomas* had learned by conſtantly hearing ſermons, yea and exceeding good ſermons, for forty years!

We muſt inſtruct them *from houſe to houſe*; till this is done, and that in good earneſt, the *Methodiſts* will be little better than other people.

Can we find a better method of doing this than Mr. *Baxter*'s? If not, let us adopt it without delay. His whole tract, intitled, *Gildos Salvianus*, is well

well worth a careful perufal. A fhort extract from it I have fubjoined. Speaking of this viſiting from houſe to houſe, he ſays, page 351.

" We ſhall find many difficulties both in ourſelves and in the people

1. In ourſelves there is much dulneſs and lazineſs : ſo that there will be much ado to get us to be faithful in the work.

2. We have alſo a baſe man-pleaſing temper, which makes us let men periſh, rather than loſe their love, and let them go quietly to hell, leſt we ſhould anger them.

3. Some of us have alſo a fooliſh baſhfulneſs. We know not how to begin, or to ſpeak plain. We bluſh to ſpeak for Chriſt, or to contradict the devil, or to ſave a ſoul.

4. Our intereſt ſtops our mouths, and makes us unfaithful in the work of Chriſt.

5. But the greateſt hindrance is, weakneſs of faith : ſo our whole motion is weak, becauſe the ſpring of it is weak.

6. Laſtly, we are unſkilful in the work. How few know how to deal with men, ſo as to get within them, to win upon them, and ſuit all our diſcourſe to their ſeveral conditions and tempers ; to chooſe the fitteſt ſubjects, and follow them with an holy mixture of ſerioufneſs, and terror, and love, and meekneſs, and evangelical allurements ?

And we have as many difficulties to grapple with in our people.

1. Too

1. Too many of them will be unwilling to be taught, till we conquer their perverſeneſs by the force of reaſon, and the power of love.

2. And many are ſo dull, that they will ſhun being taught, for fear of ſhewing their dulneſs. And indeed you will find it extremely hard to make them underſtand the very plaineſt points.

3. And it is ſtill harder, to fix things on their heart, without which all our labour is loſt. If you have not therefore great ſerioufneſs and fervency, what good can you expect? And when all is done, it is the Spirit of grace, he alone, who muſt do the work.

4. And when we have made ſome impreſſions upon their hearts, if we look not after them, they will ſoon die away.

But as great as this labour of private inſtruction is, it is abſolutely neceſſary. For after all our preaching, many of our people are almoſt as ignorant as if they had never heard the goſpel. I ſtudy to ſpeak as plain as I can; yet I frequently meet with thoſe who have been my hearers for many years, who know not, whether Chriſt be God or man; or, that infants have any original ſin. And how few are there, that know the nature of repentance, faith and holineſs? Moſt of them have a ſort of confidence, that Chriſt will juſtify and ſave them, while the world has their hearts, and they live to themſelves. And I have found by experience, that one of theſe has learned more

more from an hour's close discourse, than from ten years public preaching.

And undoubtedly this private application is implied in those solemn words of the apostle; *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.*

This is likewise necessary to the greater glory of God, by the fuller success of the gospel. O brethren, if we could generally set this work on foot in all our societies, and prosecute it skilfully and zealously, what glory would redound to God thereby? If the common ignorance were thus banished, and our vanity and idleness turned into the study of the way of life, and every shop and every house busied in speaking of the word and works of God: surely God would dwell in our habitations, and make them his delight.

And this is necessary to the welfare of our people, many of whom neither believe nor repent to this day. Look round about, and see how many of them are still in apparent danger of damnation! And how can you walk, and talk, and be merry with such people, when you know their case? Methinks when you look them in the face, you should break forth into tears, as the prophet did when he looked upon *Hazael*, and then set on them with the most vehement and importunate exhortations. O then, for God's sake,

ſake, and for the ſake of poor ſouls, beſtir yourſelves, and ſpare no pains that may conduce to their ſalvation.

What cauſe have we to bleed before the Lord this day, that have ſo long neglected this great and good work? That have been preachers ſo many years, and have done ſo little by perſonal inſtructions for the ſaving of mens ſouls? If we had but ſet on this work ſooner, how many more might have been brought to Chriſt? And how much holier and happier might we have made our ſocieties before now? And why might we not have done it ſooner? There were many hindrances in the way: and ſo there are ſtill, and always will be. But the greateſt hindrance was in ourſelves, in our dulneſs and littleneſs of faith and love. O that God would throughly humble us, and cauſe us to bewail our own neglects; that we may not think it enough to lament the ſins of others, while we overlook our own!

But it is objected, 1. This courſe will take up ſo much time, that we ſhall have no time to follow our ſtudies.

I anſwer, 1. Gaining knowledge is a good thing; but ſaving ſouls is a better. 2. By this very thing you will gain the moſt excellent knowledge of God and eternity. 3. But you will have abundant time for gaining other knowledge too, if you ſpend all your mornings therein. Only ſleep not more than you need; talk not

not more than you need; and never be idle, nor triflingly employed. But 4. If you can do but one, either follow your ſtudies or inſtruct the ignorant; let your ſtudies alone; I would throw by all the libraries in the world, rather than be guilty of the perdition of one ſoul.

It is objected, II. "The people will not ſubmit to it." If ſome do not, others will gladly. And the ſucceſs with them may be ſo much as to repay all our labour. O let us herein follow the example of St. *Paul*. 1. For our general buſineſs, *Serving the Lord with all humility of mind.* 2. Our ſpecial work, *Take heed to yourſelves, and to all the flock.* 3. Our doctrine, *Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* 4. The place and manner of teaching, *I have taught you publickly, and from houſe to houſe.* 5. The object and internal manner, *I ceaſed not to warn every one, night and day, with tears.* This it is that muſt win ſouls and preſerve them. 6. His innocency and ſelf-denial for the advantage of the goſpel, *I have coveted no man's ſilver or gold.* 7. His patience, *Neither count I my life dear unto myſelf.* And among all our motives, theſe ſhould be ever before our eyes: 1. *The church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.* 2. *Grievous wolves ſhall enter in: yea, of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things.* Write all this upon your hearts, and it will do you more good than twenty years ſtudy of lower things.

We may, 1. Every preacher, take an exact catalogue of thoſe in ſociety, from one end of each town to the other. 2. Go to each houſe, and give, with ſuitable exhortation and direction, the "inſtructions for children." 3. Be ſure to deal gently with them, and take off all diſcouragements as effectually as you can. See that the children get theſe by heart. Adviſe the grown perſons to ſee that they underſtand them. And enlarge upon and apply every ſentence as cloſely as you can. And let your dealing with thoſe you begin with, be ſo gentle, winning and convincing, that the report of it, may move others to deſire your coming. True, it is far eaſier to preach a good ſermon, than to inſtruct the ignorant in the principles of religion. And as much as this work is deſpiſed by ſome, I doubt not but it will try the parts and ſpirits of us all. So archbiſhop *Uſſher*; "Great ſcholars may think it beneath them to ſpend their time in teaching the firſt principles of the doctrine of Chriſt. But they ſhould conſider, that the laying the foundation ſkilfully, as it is matter of the greateſt importance in the whole building, ſo it is the maſter-piece of the wiſeſt builder: *according to the grace of God, which is given unto me, as a wiſe maſter-builder, I have laid the foundation*, ſaith the great apoſtle. And let the wiſeſt of us all try whenever we pleaſe, we ſhall find, that to lay this ground-work rightly, to make

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an " ignorant man underſtand the grounds of religion, will put us to the trail of our ſkill."

Perhaps in doing this, it may be well,

1. After a few loving words ſpoken to all in the houſe, to take each perſon ſingly into another room, where you may deal cloſely with them, about their ſin and miſery and duty. Set theſe home, or you loſe all your labour. At leaſt let none be preſent but thoſe who are quite familiar with each other.

2. Hear what the children have learned by heart.

3. Chooſe ſome of the weighteſt points, and try by farther queſtions how they underſtand them. As, " do you believe you have ſin in you,? That you was born in ſin? What does ſin deſerve? What remedy has God provided for guilty, helpleſs ſinners?"

4. Often with the queſtion, ſuggeſt the anſwer. As, " What is repentance?" Sorrow for ſin, or a conviction that we are guilty, helpleſs ſinners? " What is faith?" A divine conviction of things not ſeen?

5. Where you perceive they do not underſtand the ſtreſs of your queſtion, you muſt lead them into it by other queſtions. So I have aſked ſome, " How do you think your many and great ſins will be pardoned?" They anſwer, " By repenting and mending my life," and never mention Chriſt. I aſk farther, But do you think your amendment will make ſatisfaction for you

paſt ſins?" They will anſwer, "We hope ſo, or elſe we know not what will." One would think now, theſe had no knowledge of Chriſt at all. And indeed, ſome have not. But others have, and give ſuch anſwers only becauſe they do not underſtand the ſcope of the queſtion. Aſk them farther, "Can you be ſaved without the death of Chriſt?" They immediately ſay, "No." And if you aſk, "What has he done or ſuffered for you?" They will ſay, "He ſhed his blood for us," and profeſs, "they truſt in that for ſalvation." But many cannot expreſs even what they have ſome conception of, nay, can ſcarce learn, when expreſſions are put into their mouths. With theſe you are to deal exceeding tenderly, leſt they be diſcouraged.

6. If you perceive them troubled that they cannot anſwer, ſtep in yourſelf, and take the burden off them: anſwering that queſtion yourſelf; and then do it throughly and plainly, and make a full explication of the whole buſineſs to them.

7. Thus, when you have tried their knowledge, proceed to inſtruct them yourſelf, according to their ſeveral capacities. If a man underſtand the fundamentals, fall on what you perceive he moſt needs, either explaining further ſome doctrine of the goſpel, or ſome duty, or ſhewing the neceſſity of ſomething he neglects, as may be moſt edifying to him. If it be one that is groſly ignorant, give him a ſhort recital of the Chriſtian religion

religion in the plaineſt words. And if you perceive he underſtands not, go over it again till he does, and if poſſible fix it in his memory.

8. Next, inquire into his ſtate, whether convinced, or unconvinced, converted or unconverted. Tell him, if need be, what converſion is. And then renew and inforce the inquiry.

9. If you perceive he is unconverted, your next buſineſs is, to labour with all your ſkill and power, to bring his heart to a ſenſe of his condition. Set this home with a more earneſt voice than you ſpoke before; for if you get not to the heart, you do nothing.

10. Conclude all with a ſtrong exhortation, which ſhould contain two parts; 1. The duty of the heart, in order to receive Chriſt; 2. The avoiding former ſins, and conſtantly uſing the outward means. And here be ſure, if you can, to get their promiſe, to forſake ſin, change their company, and uſe means. And do this ſolemnly; reminding them of the preſence of God, that hears their promiſes, and will expect the performance.

11. Before you leave them, engage the head of each family to call all his family every *Sunday*, before they go to bed, and hear what they can rehearſe, and ſo continue till they have learned the inſtructions perfectly. And afterwards take care, that they do not forget what they had learned.

12. Speak differently, according to the difference of them you have to deal with, as they are

dull and obſtinate, or timerous and tender. Be as plain as poſſible to thoſe of weak capacities, and give them ſcripture-proof for all you ſay.

Q. 18. How ſhall we prevent improper perſons from inſinuating themſelves into the ſociety?

A. 1. Give tickets to none till they are recommended by a leader, with whom they have met three months on trial:

2. Give notes to none but thoſe who are recommended by one you know, or till they have met three or four times in a claſs:

3. Give them the rules the firſt time they meet.

Q. 19. How can we add a proper ſolemnity to the admiſſion of new members?

A. 1. In all large towns, admit new members into the bands only at the quarterly love-feaſt, following the viſitation: 2. Read the names of the men to be admitted the week before: 3. Admit into the ſociety, only on the *Sunday* following the quarterly viſitation: 4. Read the names of thoſe to be admitted, on the *Sunday* evening before: 5. Then alſo let the names of thoſe be read, who are excluded from the ſociety.

Q. 20. Should we inſiſt every where on the band-rules? Particularly, that relating to ruffles?

A. By all means. This is no time to give any encouragement to ſuperfluity of apparel. Therefore give no band-tickets to any in *England*, *Scotland*, or *Ireland*, till they *have left them* off.

In order to this, 1. Read in every ſociety the

" thoughts

" thoughts concerning dreſs." 2. In viſiting the claſſes, be very mild, but very ſtrict. 3. Allow no exempt caſes, not even of a married woman: better one ſuffer than many.

To encourage meeting in band. 1. In every large ſociety, have a love feaſt quarterly for the bands only: 2. Never fail to meet them apart from the ſociety, once a week: 3. Exhort all believers to embrace the advantage: 4. Give a band-ticket to none, till they have met a quarter on trial.

Q. 21. Have thoſe in band left off ſnuff and drams?

A. No. Many are ſtill enſlaved to one or the other. In order to redreſs this, 1. Let no preacher touch either on any account: 2. Strongly diſſuade our people from them: 3. Anſwer their pretences, particularly thoſe of curing the cholic, or helping digeſtion.

Q. 22. Do we obſerve any evil which has lately prevailed among our ſocieties?

A. Many of our members have lately married with unbelievers, even ſuch as were wholly unawakened. And this has been attended with fatal conſequences. Few of theſe have gained the unbelieving wife or huſband. Generally they have themſelves either had an heavy croſs for life, or entirely fallen back into the world.

Q. 23. What can be done to put a ſtop to this?

A. 1. Let every preacher take occaſion publicly to inforce the apoſtle's caution, *Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers.*

2. Let it be openly declared in every place, That he who acts contrary to this, will be expelled the ſociety:

3. When any ſuch is expelled, let an exhortation be ſubjoined, diſſuading others from following that bad example:

4. And let all be exhorted, to take no ſtep in ſo weighty a matter, without firſt adviſing with the moſt ſerious of his brethren.

Q. 24. Ought any woman to marry without the conſent of her parents?

A. In general, ſhe ought not. Yet there may be an exception. For if, 1. A woman be under a neceſſity of marrying: If, 2. Her parents abſolutely refuſe to let her marry any Chriſtian: then ſhe may, nay ought to marry without their conſent. Yet even then a Methodiſt-preacher ought not to marry her.

Q. 25. Do not ſabbath-breaking, dram-drinking, evil-ſpeaking, unprofitable converſation, lightneſs, gaiety or expenſiveneſs of apparel, and contracting debts without ſufficient care to diſcharge them, ſtill prevail in ſeveral places? What method can we take to remove theſe evils?

A. 1. Let us preach expreſly and ſtrongly on each of theſe heads: 2. Read the ſermon upon evil-ſpeaking, in every ſociety: 3. Let the

let

let the leaders clofely examine, and exhort every perfon to put away the accurfed thing: 4. Let the preacher warn the fociety in every place, that none who is hereafter guilty can remain with us: 5. In order to give them clearer views of the evil of thefe things, let every preacher recommend to every fociety, and that frequently and earneftly, the reading the books we have publifhed, preferable to any other. And when any new book is fent to any place, let him fpeak of it in the public congregation: 6. Extirpate fmuggling, buying or felling uncuftomed goods, out of every fociety: particularly in *Cornwall*, and in all fea-port towns. Let no perfon remain with us, who will not totally abftain from every kind and degree of it: and after admonifhing him, filence every local preacher who fpeaks in defence of it. Speak tenderly, but earneftly and frequently of it, in every fociety near the coafts: and read to them and difperfe diligently among them "The Word to a Smuggler." 7. Extirpate bribery, receiving any thing, directly or indirectly, for voting in any election. Shew no refpect of perfons herein, but expel all who touch the accurfed thing. Let this be particularly obferved at *Grimfby* and *St. Ives*. Largely fhew in every fociety the wickednefs of thus felling our country. Do the fame thing in private converfation. And read every where "The Word to a Freedholder," and difperfe it

with both hands: and in public and private inlarge on œconomy, as a branch of religion.

Q. 26. What ſhall we do to prevent ſcandal, when any of our members become bankrupt?

A Let two of the principal members of the ſociety be deputed to examine his accounts. And if he has not kept fair accounts, or has been concerned in that baſe practiſe of raiſing money by *coining* notes (commonly called *the bill-trade)* let him be immediately expelled the ſociety.

Q. 27. What is the office of a Chriſtian miniſter?

A. To watch over ſouls, as he that muſt give account.

Q. 28. In what view may we and our helpers be conſidered?

A. Perhaps as extraordinary meſſengers, deſigned by God to provoke others to jealouſy.

Q. 29. What is the office of an *helper?*

A. In the abſence of a miniſter, to feed and guide the flock: in particular,

1. To expound every morning and evening: (But *N. B.* He is never, in any place, to begin later in the evening than ſeven o'clock, except in harveſt-time.)

2. To meet the united ſociety, the bands, the ſelect ſociety, and the penitents, every week:

3. To receive on trial for the ſociety and bands, and to put the diſorderly back on trial:

4. To meet the leaders of the bands and claſſes weekly,

weekly, and the ſtewards, and to overlook their accounts.

Let every preacher be particularly exact in the morning preaching, and meeting the leaders.

Q. 30. What are the rules of an helper?

A. 1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time: neither ſpend any more time at any place than is ſtrictly neceſſary.

2. Be ſerious. Let your motto be, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. Avoid all lightneſs, jeſting and fooliſh talking.

3. Converſe ſparingly and cautiouſly with women: particularly with young women in private.

4. Take no ſtep toward marriage, without firſt acquainting us with your deſign.

5. Believe evil of no one: unleſs you ſee it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the beſt conſtruction on every thing You know the judge is always ſuppoſed to be on the priſoner's ſide.

6. Speak evil of no one: elſe *your* word eſpecially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breaſt, till you come to the perſon concerned.

7. Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, and as ſoon as may be, elſe it will feſter in your heart. Make all haſte to caſt the fire out of your boſom.

8. Do not affect the gentleman. You have

no more to do with this character, than with that of a dancing-master. A preacher of the gospel is the servant of all.

9. Be ashamed of nothing but sin: not of fetching wood (if time permit) or of drawing water; not of cleaning your own shoes, or your neighbours.

10. Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time. And in general, do not mend our rules, but *keep* them: not for wrath, but for conscience sake.

11. You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most.

12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such, it is your part to employ your time in the manner which we direct: partly in preaching and visiting from house to house; partly in reading, meditation and prayer: above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do *that part* of the work which we advise, at *those times* and *places*, which we judge most for his glory.

* *Q.* 31. What general method of employing our time would you advise us to?

A. We advise you, 1. As often as possible to rise at four. 2. From four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening, to meditate, pray and read partly the scripture with the notes, partly

partly the closely practical parts of what we have published. 3. From six in the morning to twelve (allowing an hour for breakfast) to read in order, with much prayer, bishop *Pearson* on the creed, Mr. *Bocham*'s and *Nelson*'s sermons; and the other books which we have published in prose or verse.

Q. 32. Should our helpers follow trades?

A. This is an important question: therefore it will be proper to consider it throughly. The question is not, whether they may occasionally work with their hands, as St. *Paul* did: but whether it be proper for them to keep shop and follow merchandize. Of those who do so at present it may be observed, they are unquestionably upright men. They are men of considerable gifts. We see the fruit of their labour, and they have a large share in the esteem and love of the people. All this pleads on their side, and cannot but give us a prejudice in their favour. Three of these urge necessity for doing this: One that he may help his aged father; another that he may maintain his wife; a third that he may keep his children; a fourth does not plead any necessity, but a desire of doing more good. One answered *J. O.* "If you cannot help your father without trading, and if the societies either cannot or will not, I will allow him what you allow him now. So this necessity is at an end." To *Ja. O.* it was answered, "Your wife wants nothing yet. It is not likely she ever will. You have

have money beforehand. So your neceſſity is not yet begun." To *R. R.* " You do not want now. When you do want any thing for your children, you ſhall have it. So here is no neceſſity.

As to the ſecond plea, doing more good, it was inquired, is it not doing evil that good may come? Is not the thing in queſtion both evil in itſelf (for us) and evil in its conſequences? *Firſt*, Is it not (with regard to travelling preachers) evil in itſelf? Is it well conſiſtent with that ſcripture, 2 *Tim.* ii. 4. *No man that warreth*, (takes on him the profeſſion of a ſoldier, as we eminently do) *entangleth himſelf with the affairs of this life*; plainly referring to the *Roman* law, which abſolutely forbad any ſoldier to follow any other profeſſion. Is it well conſiſtent with that word, *Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to teaching: meditate on theſe things, give thyſelf wholly to them?* 1 Tim. iv. 13. 15. Can we be ſaid to give ourſelves wholly to theſe things, if we follow another profeſſion? Does not our church, in her office of ordination, require every miniſter to do this? If they do not the more ſhame for them. But this plainly ſhews, what both they and we *ought* to do. *We* indeed more particularly; becauſe God has called us to *provoke them to jealouſy*, to ſupply their lack of ſervice to the ſheep that are as yet without ſhepherds, and to ſpend and be ſpent therein. We above all; becauſe every travelling preacher ſolemnly

lemnly profeſſes to have nothing elſe to do, and receives his little allowance for this very end, that he may not need to do any thing elſe, that he may not be entangled in the things of this life; but may give himſelf wholly to theſe things.

Secondly, Is it not evil in its conſequences? Have not ſome ill conſequences appeared already? And is there not the greateſt reaſon to apprehend that ſtill worſe would follow? We are concerned to give no offence, either to Jew or Gentile, or to the church of God. But this has already offended, not only many of the world, but many of our own brethren. Many of the preachers in particular have been much grieved: yea and thoſe moſt, who were moſt alive to God. Now the beginning of offence, "is as when one letteth out water:" who can gather it up again? They are grieved the more, becauſe they apprehend this would be an increaſing evil. For where will it ſtop? If one preacher follows trade, ſo may twenty; ſo may every one. And if any of them trade a little, why not ever ſo much? Who can fix how far he ſhould go? Therefore we adviſe our brethren who have been concerned herein, to give up all, and attend to the one buſineſs. And we doubt not but God will recompenſe them an hundred fold, even in this world, as well as in the world to come.

It is true, this cannot be done on a ſudden. But it may between this and the next conference. And even as to the drops that many ſold, if their wives ſell them at home, well: but it is not proper for any preacher to hawk them about. It has a bad appearance. It does not well ſuit the dignity of his calling.

Two years after, it was agreed by all our brethren, that no preacher who will not relinquiſh his trade of buying and ſelling, or of making and vending pills, drops, balſams, or medicines of any kind, ſhall be conſidered as a travelling preacher any longer: and that it ſhall be demanded of all thoſe preachers, who have traded in cloth, hardware, pills, drops, balſams, or medicines of any kind, at the next conference, whether they have intirely left it off, or not?

* *Q.* 33. Why is it, that the people under our care are no better?

A. Other reaſons may concur; but the chief is, becauſe we are not more *knowing* and more *holy*.

Q. 34. But why are we not more *knowing?*

A. Becauſe we are idle. We forget the very firſt rule, "Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time: neither ſpend any more time at any place than is ſtrictly neceſſary."

I fear there is altogether a fault in this matter: and that few of us are clear. Which of you ſpends as many hours a day, in God's *work*, as you

you did formerly in *man's work?* We talk, —or read hiſtory, or what comes next to hand.

We muſt, abſolutely muſt, cure this evil, or give up the whole work.

But how? 1. Read the *moſt uſeful* books, and that regularly and conſtantly. Steadily ſpend all the morning in this employ, or at leaſt five hours in twenty-four.

"But I read *only* the bible." Then you ought to teach others to read only the bible, and by parity of reaſon, to *hear only* the bible. But if ſo, you need preach no more. Juſt ſo ſaid *George Bell.* And what is the fruit? Why now, he neither reads the bible, nor any thing elſe.

This is rank enthuſiaſm. If you need no book but the bible, you are got above St. *Paul.* He wanted others too. *Bring the books*, ſays he, *but eſpecially the parchments*, thoſe wrote on parchment.

"But I have *no taſte* for reading." Contract a taſte for it by uſe, or return to your trade.

"But different men have different taſtes." Therefore ſome may read leſs than others; but none ſhould read leſs than this.

"But I have no books." I will give each of you, as faſt as you will read them, books to the value of five pounds. And I deſire the aſſiſtants will take care, that all the large ſocieties provide *The Chriſtian Library*, or at leaſt the notes on the new Teſtament, for the uſe of the preachers.

2. In the afternoon follow Mr. *Baxter*'s plan: Then you will have no time to ſpare: none for learning Latin or Greek, or Hebrew: you will have work enough for all your time. Then likewiſe no preacher will ſtay with us, who is as ſalt that has loſt its ſavour. For to ſuch, this employment would be mere drudgery. And in order to it, you will have need of all the knowledge you can procure.

The ſum is. Go into *every houſe* in courſe, and teach *every one* therein. Young and old, if they belong to us, to be Chriſtians inwardly and outwardly.

Make every particular plain to their underſtanding. Fix it in their memory. Write it on their heart. In order to this, there muſt be *line upon line, precept upon precept*. I remember to have heard my father aſking my mother, "How could you have the patience, to tell that blockhead the ſame thing, twenty times over?" She anſwered, "Why, if I had told him but nineteen times, I ſhould have loſt all my labour." What patience indeed, what love, what knowledge is requiſite for this?

Q. 34. In what method ſhould we inſtruct them?

A. Read, explain, inforce,

1. The rules of the ſociety:
2. Inſtructions for children:
3. The fourth volume of ſermons:
4. *Philip Henry*'s method of family prayer.

Over

Over and above: where there are ten children in a ſociety, ſpend at leaſt an hour with them twice a week. And do this, not in a dull, dry, formal manner, but in earneſt, with your might.

"But I have no gift for this." Gift or no gift, you are to do it, elſe you are not called to be a Methodiſt-preacher. Do it as you can, till you can do it as you would. Pray earneſtly for the gift, and uſe the means for it; particularly ſtudying the childrens tracts.

Q. 35. Why are not *we* more holy? Why do not *we* live in eternity? Walk with God all the day long? Why are we not all devoted to God? Breathing the whole ſpirit of *miſſionaries?*

A. Becauſe we are enthuſiaſts: looking for the end, without uſing the means.

To touch only upon two or three inſtances.

Do *you* riſe at four? Or even at five, when you do not preach?

Do you faſt once a week? Once a month? Do you know the obligation, or benefit of it?

Do you recommend the five o'clock hour for private-prayer? Do you obſerve it? Do not you find, that *any time* is *no time?*

O let us all *ſtir up the gift of God that is in us!* Let us no more *ſleep, as do others:* But whatſoever our *hand findeth to do,* let us *do it with our might!*

Q. 36. Who is the *aſſiſtant?*

A. That preacher in each circuit, who is appointed

pointed from time to time to take charge of the societies, and the other preachers therein.

Q. 37. How should an assistant be qualified for this charge?

A. By walking closely with God, and having his work greatly at heart; by understanding and loving discipline, ours in particular; and by loving the church of *England*, and resolving not to separate from it.

Q. 38. What is the business of an assistant?

A. 1. To see that the other preachers in his circuit behave well, and want nothing: 2. To visit the classes quarterly in each place, regulate the bands, and deliver new tickets: 3. To keep watch-nights and love-feasts: 4. To take in, or put out of the bands or society: 5. To hold quarterly meetings; and therein diligently to enquire both into the spiritual and temporal state of each society. 6. To take care that every society be duly supplied with books, and that the money for them be constantly returned. 7. To send from every quarterly meeting a circumstantial account to *London* of every remarkable conversion, and of every one who dies in the triumph of faith. 8. To take exact lists of his societies every *Easter*, and bring them to the next conference. 9. To meet the married men, the married women, the single men, and the single women, in the large societies once a quarter. 10. To see that every society have a private room, and a set of the library or the notes for the helper,

helper, and, 11. To travel with me, if required, once a year, through the ſocieties in his circuit.

Q. 39. Ought we to inſiſt upon our rule, that no preacher print any thing without your approbation?

A. Undoubtedly. And whoever does it for the time to come, cannot take it ill, if he is excluded from our connection. Let every one take this warning, and afterwards blame none but himſelf.

Q. 40. But has the office of an aſſiſtant been throughly executed?

A. No; not by one aſſiſtant out of three. For inſtance. Every aſſiſtant ought, 1. To "ſee that the other preachers behave well." But who has ſent me word, whether they did or no? 2. "To viſit the claſſes, regulate the bands, and deliver tickets quarterly." How few have done this? 3. Love-feaſts for the bands have been neglected. 4. Nor have perſons been regularly taken in, and put out of the bands. 5. I fear, many of the quarterly meetings are formal, not ſpiritual. 6. The ſocieties are not half ſupplied with books, not even with *Kempis*, *Inſtructions for Children* and *Primitive Phyſic*, which ought to be in every houſe. And why ſhould not each of you do like *William Pennington?* Carry books with you through every round: exert yourſelves in this. Be not aſhamed. Be not weary. Leave no ſtone unturned. 7. How few accounts have I had, either of remarkable deaths,

or

or remarkable converſions? 8. How few exact liſts have we received of the ſocieties? Take more time, and more pains in preparing them. 9. Who of you has met the married and ſingle men and women once a quarter, even in the largeſt ſocieties? 10. You have not provided a private room every where for the preacher: nor a bed to himſelf: neither the library, for want of which, ſome ſtill read traſh. Till this can be done, let there be immediately in every place, at leaſt the *Notes* and the tract on *Original Sin*.

Q. 41. Are there any other advices which you would give the aſſiſtants?

A. Several. 1. Take a regular catalogue of your ſocieties, as they live, in houſe-row. 2. Leave your ſucceſſor a particular account of the ſtate of the circuit. 3. See that every band-leader have the rules of them. 4. Vigorouſly, but calmly, inforce the rules concerning ruffles, drams, ſnuff, and tobacco. When any perſon is admitted into the ſociety, even good breeding requires him to conform to the rules of that ſociety. The ſame you ſhould inforce in *Scotland* as *England*. The *Scots* will hear reaſon as well as the *Engliſh*. 5. As ſoon as there are four men or women believers in any place, put them into a band. 6. Every where inſiſt on decency and cleanlineſs. Tell them cleanlineſs is next to godlineſs. 7. Suffer no love feaſt to laſt above an hour and half; let not one duty interfere with another, and ſtop all breaking the cake with one another.

another. That filly cuſtom was introduced by *James Wheatley*, and creates much confuſion. And, 9. inform all the people from time to time, that none ſhould remove from one ſociety to another, without a ſufficient reaſon; and that thoſe who deſire to remove are to acquaint you with their reaſons, and to have a certificate in theſe words (elſe they will not be received in other ſocieties.) "*A. B.* the bearer, is a member of our ſociety in *M*——, I believe he has a ſufficient cauſe for removing." 10. In every place, exhort thoſe who were brought up in the church to continue therein. And in viſiting the claſſes, aſk every one, "Do you go to church as often as ever you did?" Set the example yourſelf: and immediately alter every plan that interferes therewith: ſo that every preacher may attend the church, at leaſt two Sundays out of four.

Is there not a cauſe? Are we not unawares by little and little ſliding into a ſeparation from the church? O remove every tendency thereto with all diligence. 1. Let all our preachers go to church. 2. Let all the people go conſtantly; and, 3. Receive the ſacrament at every opportunity. 4. Warn all againſt niceneſs in hearing, a great and prevailing evil. 5. Warn them alſo againſt deſpiſing the prayers of the church. 6. Againſt calling our ſociety *a church* or *the church*. 7. Againſt calling our preachers *miniſters*, our houſes *meeting houſes*, (call them plain *preaching houſes*.)

houſes.) 8. Do not licenſe them as ſuch: the proper form of a petition to the judge or juſtice is, "*A. B.* deſires to have his houſe in *C*——, licenſed for public worſhip." 9. Do not licenſe yourſelf till you are conſtrained, and then not as a *Diſſenter*, but a *Methodiſt* preacher. It is time enough when you are proſecuted, to take the oaths. And by ſo doing you are licenſed.

Q. 42. But are we not *Diſſenters?*

A. We are irregular, 1. By calling ſinners to repentance, in *all places* of God's dominion. 2. By frequently uſing *extemporary prayer.* Yet we are not *Diſſenters* in the only ſenſe which our law acknowledges: namely, perſons who believe it is ſinful to attend the ſervice of the church: for we do attend it at all opportunities. We will not, dare not ſeparate from the church, for the reaſons given ſeveral years ago. We are not *Seceders*, nor do we bear any reſemblance to them. We ſet out upon quite oppoſite principles. The Seceders laid the very foundation of their work in judging and condemning *others.* We laid the foundation of our work, in judging and condemning ourſelves. They begin every where, with ſhewing their hearers, how fallen *the church* and *miniſters* are. We begin every where, with ſhewing our hearers, how fallen they are *themſelves.*

And as we are not diſſenters from the church now, ſo we will do nothing, willingly, which tends to a ſeparation from it. Therefore let every

every aſſiſtant immediately ſo order his circuit, that no preacher may be hindered from attending the church, more than two Sundays in the month. Never make light of going to church, either by word or deed. Remember Mr. *Hook*, a very eminent and zealous *papiſt*. When I aſked him, "Sir, What do you for public worſhip here, where you have no *Romiſh* ſermon?" He anſwered, "Sir, I am ſo fully convinced, it is the duty of every man to worſhip God in public, that I go to church every Sunday. If I cannot have ſuch worſhip as I would, I will have ſuch worſhip as I can."

But ſome may ſay, "Our own ſervice is public worſhip." Yes, *in a ſenſe:* but not ſuch as ſupercedes the church ſervice. We never deſigned it ſhould: we have an hundred times profeſſed the contrary. It pre-ſuppoſes public prayer, like the ſermons at the univerſity. Therefore I have over and over adviſed, "uſe no *long prayer*, either before or after ſermon." Therefore I myſelf frequently uſe only a collect, and never inlarge in prayer, unleſs at interceſſion, or on a watch-night, or on ſome extraordinary occaſion.

If it were deſigned to be inſtead of church ſervice it would be eſſentially defective. For it ſeldom has the four grand parts of public prayer. Deprecation, petition, interceſſion and thankſgiving. Neither is it, even on the Lord's day, concluded with the Lord's ſupper.

The hour for it on that day, unleſs where there is ſome peculiar reaſon for a variation,

ſhould be five in the morning as well as in the evening. Why ſhould we make God's day the ſhorteſt of the ſeven?

But if the people put ours in the room of the church ſervice, we *hurt* them that ſtay with us, and *ruin* them that leave us. For then they will go no where but lounge the ſabbath away, without any public worſhip at all.

I adviſe therefore all the *Methodiſts* in *England* and *Ireland*, who have been brought up in the church, conſtantly to attend the ſervice of the church, at leaſt every Lord's day.

Q. 43. Are all our preachers merciful to their beaſts?

A. Perhaps not. Every one ought, not only to ride it moderately, but alſo to ſee with his own eyes his horſe rubbed, fed and bedded.

**Q.* 44. Do we ſufficiently watch over our helpers?

A. We might conſider thoſe that are with us as our pupils: into whoſe behaviour and ſtudies we ſhould therefore make a particular enquiry every day.

Should we not frequently aſk each, Do you walk cloſely with God? Have you now fellowſhip with the Father and the Son? At what hour do you riſe? Do you punctually obſerve the morning and evening hour of retirement? Do you ſpend the day in the manner which we adviſe? Do you read the books we adviſe, and no other? Do you faſt as often as your health will permit?

permit? Do you converſe ſeriouſly, uſefully and cloſely? Do you pray before, and have you a determinate end in every converſation?

To be more particular:

Do you uſe all the means of grace yourſelf, and inforce the uſe of them on all perſons?

They are either *inſtituted* or *prudential.*

I. The inſtituted are,

1ſt, Prayer; private, family, public: conſiſting of deprecation, petition, interceſſion, thankſgiving.

Do you uſe each of theſe conſtantly (at ſet times) and fervently?

Do you uſe private prayer every morning and evening? If you are your own maſter, at five in the evening, and the hour before or after morning preaching?

Do you forecaſt wherever you are, how to ſecure theſe hours?

Do you avow it every where?

Are you reſolute herein?

Do you call your family together at five?

Do you aſk every where, 1. Have *you* family prayer? 2. Do you retire at five o'clock?

II. Searching the ſcripture, by,

1. Reading: *conſtantly*, ſome part of every day, and at all vacant hours; *regularly*, all the new Teſtament (at leaſt) and the Leſſons for Children in order; *carefully*, with the Notes, *ſeriouſly*,

deliberately, with much prayer preceding, accompanying and following: *fruitfully*, immediately practiſing what you learn there?

What other books do you read? Is it wiſe to ready any, till you have read our tracts, and the Chriſtian Library?

Do you give the morning to reading, writing and prayer?

2. Meditating: at ſet times? How? By biſhop *Hall*'s, or Mr. *Baxter*'s rule? How long?

3. Hearing: conſtantly? Every morning?

Humbly? Uncritically, devoutly?

Carefully? With prayer before, at, after?

Fruitfully? Immediately putting in practice?

Have you a new Teſtament always in your pocket?

(See that the Notes are in every ſociety. Explain them to the congregation.)

III. The Lord's ſupper. Do you uſe this,

At every opportunity? With due preparation?

That is, with ſolemn prayer? With careful ſelf-examination? With deep repentance ſuited thereto? With earneſt and deliberate ſelf-devotion?

Do you in communicating *diſcern* the Lord's body?

Do you afterward *retire*, not formally, but in earneſt?

IV. Faſting:

IV. Faſting: God led us to this at *Oxford*. And he led all of you to it, when you firſt ſet out.

How often do you faſt now? Every Friday? In what degree?

V. Chriſtian converſence.

Are we convinced, how important, and how difficult it is to order our converſation right?

Is it always *in grace?* Seaſoned with ſalt? Meet to miniſter grace to the hearers?

Do we not converſe too long at a time? Is not an hour at a time commonly enough?

Would it not be well to plan our converſation beforehand? To pray before and after it?

II. Prudential means we may uſe either as *common Chriſtians*, as *Methodiſts*, as *preachers*, or as *aſſiſtants*.

1. As common Chriſtians. What particular rules have *you*, for avoiding evil? Doing good? Growing in grace? What arts of holy living?

2. As Methodiſts; Do you never miſs any meeting of the ſociety? Neither your claſs, or band?

3. As preachers: Do you meet every ſociety weekly? Alſo the leaders? And bands, if any?

Do you viſit the ſick? And the well? Inſtructing maſters and parents? And in all relative duties?

4. As aſſiſtants: Do you fill up and regulate

the bands wherever you come? Diligently enquire into the ſtate of the books, and do all you can to propagate them? Keep watch-nights once a month? And love-feaſts? With one twice a year, for all the ſociety?

Do you viſit every ſociety once a quarter, and regulate all things therein?

Do you take a regular catalogue of your ſocieties at leaſt once a year?

Do you write me an account of all the defects of the common preachers, which you cannot yourſelf cure?

Theſe means may be uſed without fruit. But there are ſome means which cannot. Namely, watching, denying ourſelves, taking up our croſs, exerciſe of the preſence of God.

1. Do we ſteadily watch againſt the world, the devil, ourſelves? The beſetting ſin?

2. Do you deny yourſelves every uſeleſs pleaſure of ſenſe? Imagination? Honour? Are you temperate in all things? To take one inſtance, in food? Do you uſe only that *kind* and that *degree*, which is beſt both for the body and ſoul? Do you ſee the neceſſity of this?

Do you eat no fleſh ſuppers? No late ſuppers? Theſe naturally tend to deſtroy bodily health?

Do you eat only three meals a day? If four, are you not an excellent pattern to the flock?

Do you take no more food than is neceſſary at each meal? You may know if you do, by a load

at

at your ſtomach: by drowſineſs, or heavineſs, and in a while, by weak or bad nerves.

Do you uſe only that *kind*, and that *degree* of drink which is beſt both for your body and ſoul?

Do *you* drink water? Why not? Did you ever? Why did you leave it off? If not for health, when will you begin again? To day?

How often do you drink wine or ale? Every day? Do you *want* or *waſte* it?

3. Wherein do you *take up your croſs* daily? Do you chearfully *bear your croſs* (whatever is grievous to nature) as a gift of God, and labour to profit thereby?

4. Do you endeavour to ſet God always before you? To ſee his eye continually fixt upon you? Never can you uſe theſe means, but a bleſſing will enſue. And the more you uſe them, the more will you "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt."

Q. 45. What can be done in order to a cloſer union of our helpers with each other?

A. 1. Let them be deeply convinced of the want there is of it at preſent, and the abſolute neceſſity of it.

2. Let them pray for an earneſt deſire of union.

3. Let them ſpeak freely to each other.

4. When they meet, let them never part without prayer.

5. Let them beware how they defpife each other's gifts.

6. Let them never fpeak flightingly of each other in any kind.

7. Let them defend one another's characters in every thing, to the utmoft of their power: And

8. Let them labour in honour each to prefer the other before himfelf.

Q. 46. How fhall we avoid popularity? We mean fuch eſteem or love from the people, as is not for the glory of God?

A. 1. Earneſtly pray for a piercing fenfe of the danger there is, and the finfulnefs of it.

2. Take care how you ingratiate yourfelf with any people, by flacknefs of difcipline:

3. Or by any method which another preacher cannot follow.

4. Warn the people among whom you are moft, of eſteeming or loving you too much.

5. Converfe fparingly with thofe who are particularly fond of you.

Q. 47. How often fhould our helpers preach?

A. Not more than twice a day, unleſs on a *Sunday*, or fome extraordinary occafion.

Q. 48. Which is the beſt general method of preaching.

A. 1. To invite. 2. To convince. 3. To offer Chriſt. 4. To build up: and to do this in fome meaſure in every fermon.

Q. 49. Are there any fmaller advices relating to preaching, which might be of uſe to us?

A. Perhaps

A. Perhaps theſe, 1. Be ſure to begin and end, preciſely at the time appointed.

2. Endeavour to be ſerious, weighty, and ſolemn in your whole deportment before the congregation.

3. Always ſuit your ſubject to the audience.

4. Chooſe the plaineſt texts you can.

5. Take care not to ramble from your text, but keep cloſe to it, and make out from it what you take in hand.

6. Beware of allegorizing or ſpiritualizing too much.

7. Take care of any thing aukward or affected, either in your phraſe, geſture or pronunciation.

8. Tell each other, if you obſerve any thing of this kind.

9. Sing no hymns of your own compoſing.

10. Without a preſſing reaſon, do not pray above eight or ten minutes (at moſt) without intermiſſion.

11. It would be well for every young preacher, frequently to exhort, without taking any text: and for every one, young or old, frequently to read and inlarge upon a portion of the Notes.

Q. 50. What ſermons do we find by experience to be attended with the greateſt bleſſing?

A. 1. Such as are moſt cloſe, convincing, ſearching. 2. Such as have moſt of Chriſt. 3. Such as urge the heinouſneſs of mens living in contempt or ignorance of him.

Q. 51. But have not ſome of us been led off

from practical preaching, by (what was called) *preaching Chriſt?*

A. Indeed we have. The moſt effectual way of preaching Chriſt, is to preach him in all his offices, and to declare his *law*, as well as his *goſpel*, both to believers and unbelievers.

Q. 52. Do we now all preach ſtrongly and cloſely, concerning both *inward* and *outward* holineſs?

A. It would be well, if we were more frequently and more largely to inſiſt upon it in all its branches.

Q. 53. Do we inſiſt enough on practical religion in general? And in particular, on relative duties? Uſing the means of grace? Private prayer? Self-denial? Faſting? Serioufneſs?

A. It ſeems moſt of us have been wanting here. Let us take care to ſupply this defect for the future.

Q. 54. How ſhall we be aſſured that no preacher will ever diſappoint a congregation?

A. Aſk every one, 1. Do you ſee the great ſin, and fatal conſequences of it? 2. Will you break a limb rather than wilfully break your word herein? 3. If you do, can you blame us, for not employing you any more?

Q. 55. How ſhall we guard againſt formality in public worſhip? Particularly in ſinging?

A. 1. By preaching frequently on that head. 2. By taking care to ſpeak only what we feel. 3. By chooſing ſuch hymns as are proper for the congre-

congregation; generally hymns of prayer or praiſe, rather than deſcriptive of particular ſtates. 4. By not ſinging too much at once; ſeldom more than five or ſix verſes: 5. By ſuiting the tune to the nature of the hymn: 6. By often ſtopping ſhort and aſking the people, "Now! Do you know what you ſaid laſt? Did you ſpeak no more than you felt? Did you ſing it as unto the Lord; with the ſpirit and with the underſtanding alſo?"

Q. 56. What can be done to make the people ſing true?

A. 1. Learn to ſing true yourſelves. 2. Recommend the tunes every where. 3. If a preacher cannot ſing himſelf, let him chooſe two or three perſons in every place to pitch the tune for him.

Q. 57. What is it beſt to take juſt after preaching?

A. Lemonade; candied orange peel, or a little ſoft, warm ale. But egg and wine is downright poiſon.

Q. 58. How ſhall we try thoſe who think they are moved by the Holy Ghoſt to preach?

A. Inquire, 1. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they deſire and ſeek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of converſation? 2. Have they *gifts* (as well as *grace*) for the work? Have they (in ſome tolerable degree) a clear, ſound underſtanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God?

Have they a juſt conception of ſalvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they ſpeak juſtly, readily, clearly? 3. Have they *fruit?* Are any truly convinced of ſin and converted to God by their preaching?

As long as theſe three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. Theſe we receive as ſufficient proof, that he is moved thereto by the Holy Ghoſt.

Q. 59. But how ſhall we know, whether they concur or not, in any particular perſon?

A. 1. If he is near us, we will talk with him on the preceding heads and hear him preach.

2. We will deſire him to write down or relate the reaſons, why he thinks he is called of God thereto.

3. We will examine thoſe who ſeem to be convinced of ſin, or converted to God by his preaching.

4. If he is at a diſtance, we will deſire the aſſiſtant to do this: and to inquire, what is the judgment of his brethren concerning him.

Q. 60. What method may we uſe in receiving a new helper;

A. A proper time for doing this, is at a conference after ſolemn faſting and prayer.

Every perſon to be admitted is then to be preſent, and each of them may be aſked,

* "*A. B.* Have *you* faith in Chriſt? Are you *going on to perfection?* Do you expect to be *perfected in love* in this life? Are you groaning after it?

it? Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and his work? Do you know the *Methodist*-plan? Have you read the *plain account?* The *appeals?* Do you know the rules of the society? Of the bands? Do you keep them? Do you take no snuff? Tobacco? Drams? Do you constantly attend the church and sacrament? Have you read the minutes? Are you willing to conform to them? Have you considered the twelve rules of a helper? Especially the first, tenth, and twelfth? Will you keep them for conscience-sake? Are you determined to employ *all* your time in the work of God? Will you preach every morning and evening? Endeavouring not to speak too long (an hour in the whole) or too loud? Not lolling with your elbows? Have you read the *rules of action and utterance?* Will you meet the society, the bands, the select society, and the leaders in every place? Will you diligently and earnestly instruct the children, and visit from house to house? Will you recommend fasting, both by precept and example?"

We may then receive him as a probationer, by giving him the minutes of the conference inscribed thus,

To *A. B.*

"You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance. Make full proof hereof, and we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow-labourer.

"*Observe*, You are not to ramble up and down, but

but to go where the aſſiſtant directs, and there only."

Let him then read and carefully weigh what is contained therein, and ſee whether he can agree to them, or not.

If he can, let him come to the next conference; where, after examination, faſting and prayer, he may be received into full connection with us, by giving him the minutes inſcribed thus:

"So long as you freely conſent to, and earneſtly endeavour to walk by theſe rules, we ſhall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-labourer."

Mean time, let none exhort in any of our ſocieties without a note of permiſſion from the aſſiſtant. Let every exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly. And let every aſſiſtant rigorouſly inſiſt upon it.

Q. 61. How can we provide for worn-out preachers?

A. Thoſe that can preach a little may be ſupernumerary preachers where there is moſt need. As for thoſe who cannot preach at all.

1. Let every travelling preacher contribute *half a guinea* yearly at the conference.

2. Let every one when firſt received as a travelling preacher, pay *one guinea*.

3. Let this be lodged in the hands of the ſtewards approved of by the majority of the preachers.

4. The preſent ſtewards are *Joſeph Cownly* and *John Murlin*.

5. Out

5. Out of this let provifion be made, firft for the worn-out preachers, then for the widows and children of thofe that are dead.

6. Every worn-out preacher fhall receive at leaft *ten pounds* a year.

7. Every widow of a preacher fhall receive yearly during her widowhood, (if fhe wants it) a fum not exceeding *ten pounds*.

8. Every child left by a preacher fhall receive once for all, a fum not ufually exceeding *ten pounds*.

9. But none is intitled to any thing from this fund, till he has fubfcribed *two guineas*.

10. Nor any perfon from the time he ceafes (unlefs worn-out) to be a travelling preacher:

11. Nor any who neglects paying his fubfcription for four years together.

12. Let every preacher, who does not bring or fend his fubfcription to the conference, be fined *two fhillings and fixpence*.

13. This fund is never to be reduced to lefs than an *hundred pounds*.

14. Let a committee be chofen to fee thefe rules duly executed. The prefent committee are,

Peter Jaco,
Duncan Wright,
Thomas Hanby,
Robert Roberts,
Alexander Mather,
Thomas Johnfon,
John Pawfon,
Daniel Bumftead,
Thomas Olivers,
John Helton,
Chriftopher Hopper.

15. Let

15. Let an exact account of all receipts and disbursements be produced at the conference.

Q. 62. How may the wives of the travelling preachers be provided for?

A. If a preacher marries hand-over head, he must provide for himself. As to the rest, we cannot but observe many inconveniencies have arisen, from the present method of providing for the wives of the preachers. Those who are most proper for several places, cannot be sent thither because they are married. And if they are sent, the people look upon them with an evil eye, because they are burdened by their families. In order to remedy these inconveniencies, let it be considered, 1. What each circuit can contribute: 2. How many wives are to be provided for: (their children are provided for where they are.) 3. By what circuits? By this means whether the preachers in any particular circuit are married or single, it makes no difference: so that any preacher may be sent to any circuit without any difficulty.

Q. 63. How many circuits are there now?

A. Four and thirty in *England*, ten in *Ireland*, three in *Wales*, two in *Scotland*, and three in *America*.

Q. 64. Are our preaching-houses safe?

A. Not all: for some of them are not settled on trustees. Several of the trustees for others are dead.

Q. 65. What then is it to be done?

A. 1. Let

A. 1. Let the ſurviving truſtees chooſe others without delay. 2. Let thoſe who have debts on any of the houſes, give a bond to ſettle them, as ſoon as their debt is paid.

Q. 66. In what form may an houſe be ſettled?

A. In the following:

" This indenture made
" between *B. Heap*, of *Mancheſter*, in the coun-
" ty of on the one part, and *Tho. Phi-*
" *lips*, hatter, *&c.* on the other part, *witneſſeth*,
" that in conſideration of five ſhillings, lawful
" money of *Great-Britain*, by the ſaid *T. P.* to
" to the ſaid *B. H.* truly paid, before the ſeal-
" ing and delivery hereof (the receit whereof the
" ſaid *B. H.* doth hereby acknowledge) and for
" divers other conſiderations him thereunto
" moving, the ſaid *B. H.* hath granted, bargained
" and ſold; and by theſe preſents doth grant,
" bargain and ſell unto the ſaid *T. P.* &c. their
" heirs and aſſigns for ever, all that lately erected
" houſe or tenement, with the yard thereunto
" adjoining, ſituate near the upper end of *Mar-*
" *ket-ſtreet Lane*, in *Mancheſter* aforeſaid, now in
" the tenure or occupation of *T. Woolſinden*, to-
" gether with all the ways, drains, walls, and
" privileges to the ſaid premiſes, or any part
" thereof appertaining, as the ſame were purchaſ-
" ed of *S. Hope*, of *Mancheſter* aforeſaid, brick-
" layer, before the ſaid houſe or tenement was
" built; and all the profits thereof, and all the
" right, title, and intereſt, in law and equity.

" To

" To *have and to hold* the ſaid houſe or tenement,
" yard and other premiſes, to the ſaid *T. P.* &c.
" their heirs, and aſſigns for ever : *nevertheleſs*
" upon ſpecial truſt and confidence, and to the
" intent, that they and the ſurvivors of them,
" and the truſtees for the time being, do and
" ſhall permit *J. Weſley*, late of *Lincoln Coll. Ox-*
" *ford*, clerk, and ſuch other perſons as he ſhall
" from time to time appoint, and at all times,
" during his natural life, *and no other perſons*,
" to have and enjoy the free uſe and benefit of
" the ſaid premiſes ; that the ſaid *J. Weſley*, and
" ſuch other perſons as he appoints, may there-
" in preach and expound God's holy word : and
" after his deceaſe, upon farther truſt and confi-
" dence, and to the intent that the ſaid truſtees
" and the ſurvivors of them, and the truſtees for
" the time being, do and ſhall permit *Charles Weſ-*
" *ley*, late of *Chriſt Church Coll. Oxf.* clerk, and
" ſuch other perſons as he ſhall from time to time
" appoint, during his life, and no others, to have
" and enjoy the ſaid premiſes for the purpoſes
" aforeſaid : and after his deceaſe, upon farther
" truſt and confidence, and to the intent that
" the ſaid *T. P.* &c. or the major part of them,
" or the ſurvivors of them, and the major part of
" the truſtees of the ſaid premiſes, for the time
" being, ſhall from time to time, and at all times
" for ever thereafter, permit ſuch perſons as
" ſhall be appointed at the yearly conference of
" the people called *Methodiſts*, in *London*, *Briſtol*
" or

" or *Leeds*, and no others, to have and enjoy the " ſaid premiſes, for the purpoſes aforeſaid: *Pro-* " *vided always, that the ſaid perſons preach no* " *other doctrine than is contained in Mr.* W.'*s* " *notes upon the New Teſtament, and four volumes* " *of ſermons: provided alſo, that they preach in* " *the ſaid houſe at leaſt one evening in every week,* " *and at five o'clock on each morning following:* " and upon farther truſt and confidence, that as " often as any of theſe truſtees, or of the truſtees " for the time being ſhall die, *or ceaſe to be a* " *member of the ſociety, commonly called Methodiſts,* " the reſt of the ſaid truſtees, or of the truſtees " for the time being, as ſoon as conveniently " may be, ſhall and may chooſe another truſtee, " or truſtees, in order to keep up the number " of *nine* truſtees for ever. In witneſs whereof " the ſaid *B. H.* hath hereunto ſet his hand and " ſeal the day and year firſt above written."

In this form the firſt proprietors of the houſe are to make it over to five, ſeven or nine truſtees.

Q. 67. But is this form a ſafe one? Should we not have the opinion of a council upon it?

A. I think this would be throwing money away 1. Becauſe this form was drawn up by three eminent counſellors: but, 2. It is the way of almoſt every lawyer, to blame what another has done. Therefore you cannot at all infer, that they *think* a thing wrong becauſe they ſay ſo. 3. If they did in reality *think* it wrong, this would not

not *prove* that it was ſo. 4. If there was (which I do not believe) ſome defect therein, who would go to law with the body of *Methodiſts?* 5. And if they did, would any court in *England* put them out of *poſſeſſion?* Eſpecially when the *intent* of the deed was plain and undeniable.

Q. 68. Is any thing farther adviſable with regard to building?

A. 1. Build all preaching houſes, if the ground will admit, in the octagon form. It is beſt for the voice, and on many accounts more commodious than any other. 2. Let the roof riſe only one third of the breadth: this is the true proportion. 3. Have enough windows and doors; and let all the windows be faſhed, opening downward. 4. Let there be no tub-pulpit; but a ſquare projection, with a long ſeat behind. 5. Let there be no backs to the ſeats, which ſhould have iſles on each ſide, and be parted in the middle by a rail running all along, to divide the men from the women.

Q. 69. Is there any exception to the rule, "Let the men and women ſit apart?"

A. In thoſe galleries where they have always ſat together, they may do ſo ſtill. But let them ſit apart every where below, and in all new-erected galleries.

Q. 70. What can be done, to make the *Methodiſts* ſenſible of the excellency of *Kingſwood* ſchool?

A. 1. Let

A. I. Let every aſſiſtant read the following account of it yearly in every ſociety. II. Let every preacher earneſtly exhort all parents, that are able to ſend their children thither, and be at the pains to anſwer all their objections, and refute all the lies they may have heard about it.

1. The wiſdom and love of God have now thruſt out a large number of labourers into his harveſt; men who deſire nothing on earth but to promote the glory of God, to ſave their own ſouls, and them that hear them. And thoſe to whom they miniſter ſpiritual things, willingly miniſter to them of their carnal things; ſo that they *have food to eat and raiment to put on*, and are content therewith.

2. A competent proviſion is likewiſe made for the wives of married preachers. Theſe alſo lack nothing; having a weekly allowance, over and above for their little children; ſo that neither they nor their huſbands need be *careful about many things*, but may wait upon the Lord without diſtraction.

3. Yet one conſiderable difficulty lies on thoſe who have boys, when they grow too big to be under their mother's direction. Having no father to govern and inſtruct them, they are expoſed to a thouſand temptations. To remedy this, we have a ſchool on purpoſe for them, wherein they have all the inſtruction they are capable of, together with all things needful for the body, clothes

clothes only excepted. And it may be, if God proſper this labour of love, they will have theſe too ſhortly.

4. In whatever view we look upon this, it is one of the nobleſt charities that can be conceived. How reaſonable is the inſtitution? Is it fit that the children of thoſe who leave wife, home, and all that is dear, to ſave ſouls from death, ſhould want what is needful either for ſoul or body? Ought not we to ſupply what the parent cannot, becauſe of his labours in the goſpel? How excellent are the effects of this inſtitution? The preacher eaſed of this weight, can the more chearfully go on in his labour. And perhaps many of theſe children may hereafter fill up the place of thoſe that ſhall *reſt from their labours.*

5. It is not ſtrange therefore, conſidering the excellence of this deſign, that Satan ſhould have taken much pains to defeat it: particularly by lies of every kind, which were plentifully invented and handed about for ſeveral years. But truth now prevails, and its adverſaries are put to ſilence. It is well known that the children want nothing; that they ſcarce know what ſickneſs means; that they are well inſtructed in whatever they are capable of learning; that they are carefully and tenderly governed; and that the behaviour of all in the houſe, elder and younger is *as becomth the goſpel of Chriſt.*

6. But the expence of ſuch an undertaking is very large; ſo that although we have at preſent

but

but thirteen or fourteen poor children, we are continually running behind, notwithſtanding the yearly ſubſcription made at *London* and *Briſtol*. The beſt means we could think of at our late conference to ſupply the deficiency is once a year to deſire the aſſiſtance of all thoſe in every place who wiſh well to the work of God; all who long to ſee ſinners converted to God, and the kingdom of Chriſt ſet up in all the earth.

7. All of *you*, who are thus minded, have an opportunity now of ſhewing your love to the goſpel. Now promote, as far as in you lies, one of the nobleſt charities in the world. Now forward, as you are able, one of the moſt excellent deſigns that ever was ſet on foot in this kingdom. Do what you can to comfort the parents, who give up their all for you, and to give their children cauſe to bleſs you. You will be no poorer for what you do on ſuch an occaſion. God is a good pay-maſter. And you know, in doing this you *lend unto the* Lord: *in due time* HE *ſhall pay you again*.

Q. 71. But how can we keep it out of debt, which never was done yet?

A. Let a collection be made for it the *Sunday* before or after Midſummer, in every preaching-houſe, great and ſmall, throughout *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*.

Q. 72. How may we raiſe a *General fund?*

A. By a yearly ſubſcription to be propoſed by every aſſiſtant when he viſits the claſſes at *Chriſtmas*,

Chriſtmas, and received at the viſitation following.

To this end he may then read and enlarge upon the following hints in every ſociety.

" 1. Within theſe twelve or fifteen years ſeveral of our brethren in various parts, having no room which would contain the congregation, by the advice of the preachers have built houſes for preaching, capable of containing the uſual number of hearers: but this has neceſſarily involved them in large debts. Their debt at *Halifax*, for inſtance, amounted two or three years ago to two hundred pounds: that at *Leeds* to more than three hundred pounds: that at *Mancheſter* to three hundred and fifty pounds: that at *Liverpool* to four hundred pounds. So that the whole debt contracted by building was, I apprehend, little ſhort of four thouſand pounds. This the ſocieties to whom thoſe houſes belong, are by no means able to pay: but the whole body of Methodiſts joining together can do it without inconvenience. Only let them chearfully exert on ſo preſſing an occaſion the ability which God hath given them.

2. But there is a greater difficulty than this. Where there are houſes, there are not preachers. Though the harveſt is plenteous, the labourers are few. And what can we do for ſupply? We cannot purchaſe them for money: we cannot hire, or make them. God alone can do this. And he has in ſome meaſure done it already. In

ſeveral

feveral parts of *England* there are local preachers, who have both gifts and graces equal to thofe of moft itinerants. "Why then do they not travel?" They are willing fo to do: but they are afraid of bringing a fcandal upon the gofpel; becaufe, they have contracted debts, which, though very fmall, they are not yet able to pay. So they are bound hand and foot: but fhall we fuffer this? Shall we not fet them at liberty? We cannot *buy* a preacher for ten thoufand pounds: but we may *releafe* one for ten or twelve. Can any money be better beftowed? Let us, in the name of God, fend thefe labourers into his harveft? Men who defire only to give their bodies, fouls, time, all, for him that was given for us.

3. But ftill how fhall we fend them into thofe parts, where they are moft of all wanted? Suppofe the northweft of *Ireland*, and the north of *Scotland?* Many are willing to hear: but not to bear the expence. Nor can it as yet be expected of them: ftay till the word of God has touched their hearts, and then they will gladly provide for them that preach it. Does it not lie upon *us*, in the mean time, to fupply their lack of fervice? To raife a general fund, out of which from time to time that expence may be defrayed? By this means, thofe who willingly offer themfelves may travel thro' every part, whether there are focieties or not, and ftay wherever there is a call, without being burdenfom to any. Thus may

the gospel, in the life and power thereof, be spread from sea to sea. Which of you will not rejoice to throw in your mite to promote this glorious work?

4. "It is true, when want of money to defray the expence is removed, another hindrance will often arise. Satan will stir up his trusty servants, to fight lest his kingdom be destroyed. But is there no way to quell riotous mobs, even when magistrates will not do their duty? There is one and only one way: move the king's-bench for an information against them. This is a way which has never failed us yet: no, not in a single instance. The only objection is the expence. A suit in the king's bench usually costs fifty or sixty pounds. But if we all join hand and heart together, cannot we make this easy too? Cannot we raise a common stock, which shall suffice for this as well as for the preceding purposes? By the blessing of God we can. And who would not gladly contribute toward it?

5. Let then every member of our society in *England*; once a year, set his shoulder to the work; contributing more or less as God has prospered him, at the *Lady-day* visitation of the classes. Let none be excluded from giving something, be it a penny, a half-penny, a farthing. Remember the widow's two mites! And let those who are able to give shillings, crowns, and pounds, do it willingly. The money contributed will be brought to *Leeds*, *Bristol*, or *London*, at

at the enſuing conference. Two-thirds of it at leaſt will be allotted for thoſe public debts which call the loudeſt. The reſt will be partly employed in ſetting at liberty ſuch local preachers as are tied down by ſmall debts: partly reſerved for propagating the goſpel, where there are none to bear the expences of the preacher.

6. Men and brethren, help! Was there ever a call like *this*, ſince you firſt heard the goſpel-ſound? Help to relieve your companions in the kingdom of Jeſus, who are preſt above meaſure. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt." Help to ſend forth able, willing labourers into your Lord's harveſt: ſo ſhall ye be aſſiſtant in ſaving ſouls from death, and hiding a multitude of ſins. Help to ſpread the goſpel of your ſalvation into the remoteſt corners of the kingdom, till "the knowledge of our Lord ſhall cover the land, as the waters cover the ſea." Help to deliver the poor out of the hand of the oppreſſor, to procure them the bleſſings which we enjoy: ſo ſhall it appear to ourſelves, and all men, that we are indeed one body, united by one ſpirit; ſo ſhall the baptized Heathens be yet again conſtrained to ſay, "See how theſe Chriſtians love one another."

The money received is to be brought by the aſſiſtants to the next conference.

Q. 73. But notwithſtanding all that has been contributed and paid, we are ſtill *ſix thouſand nine hundred and fifty eight pounds* in debt. So

 that

that we gain no ground. What can be done? How can we prevent the increaſe of debt?

A. By putting an abſolute ſtop to all building for the enſuing year. Let no new houſe be built, no addition or alteration made in any old one, unleſs the propoſers thereof can and will defray the whole expence of it.

Q. 74. What can be done in order to pay the old debt?

A. 1. Give a note to each aſſiſtant, ſpecifying the debts, toward which the money collected in each circuit next year is to be paid.

2. Let each aſſiſtant encourage the people in each place, like thoſe in *Birmingham*, to make a puſh toward paying off their own debt.

3. Let whatever is contributed in any ſingle place, which is in debt, pay that as far as it will go.

But even this method being found ineffectual, it was agreed at the conference in 1771. To change the yearly ſubſcription into a weekly one.

Q. 75. What is the ſafeſt way of leaving a legacy for any charitable purpoſe?

A. To leave it abſolutely to a perſon they can confide in.

Q. 76. What is the method wherein we uſually proceed in our conferences?

A. We inquire,

1. What preachers are *admitted?*

Who *remain* on trial?

Who are *admitted* on trial? And

Who

Who *deſiſt* from travelling?

2. Who act as *aſſiſtants* this year?
3. Are there any objections to any of the preachers? (who are named one by one.)
4. How are the preachers ſtationed this year?
5. What numbers are in the ſociety?
6. What is the *Kingſwood* collection?
7. What is contributed towards the debt?
8. How was this expended?
9. What is contributed toward the preachers fund?
10. What demands are there upon it?
11. How many preachers wives are to be provided for?
12. By what ſocieties?
13. Where and when may our next conference begin?

* *Q.* 77. What *power* is it which *you* exerciſe over both preachers and people?

A. Count *Zinzendorff* loved to keep all things *cloſe*. I love to do all things *openly*. I will therefore tell you all I know of the matter, taking it from the very beginning.

1. In *November* 1738, two or three perſons, who deſired *to flee from the wrath to come*, and then ſeven or eight more came to me in *London*, and deſired me to adviſe and pray with them. I ſaid, "If you will meet on *Thurſday* night, I will help you as well as I can." More and more then deſired to meet with them, till they were increaſed to many hundreds. The caſe was afterwards

the fame at *Briſtol*, *Kingſwood*, *Newcaſtle*, and many other parts of *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*. It may be obſerved the deſire was on *their* part, not *mine*. My deſire was to live and die in retirement. But I did not ſee that I could refuſe them my help, and be guiltleſs before God.

Here commenced my power, namely, a power to appoint *when*, and *where*, and *how* they ſhould meet: and to remove thoſe whoſe lives ſhewed, that they had no deſire to *flee from the wrath to come*. And this power remained the ſame, whether the people meeting together were twelve, twelve hundred, or twelve thouſand.

2. In a few days ſome of them ſaid, "Sir, we will not *ſit under you* for nothing. We will ſubſcribe quarterly." I ſaid, "I will have nothing, for I want nothing. My fellowſhip ſupplies me with all, and more than I want." One replied, "Nay, but you want *one hundred and fifteen pounds* to pay for the leaſe of the *Foundery*. And likewiſe a large ſum of money will be wanting to put it in repair." On this conſideration I ſuffered them to ſubſcribe. And when the ſociety met, I aſked, "Who will take the trouble of receiving this money, and *paying* it where it is needful?" One ſaid, "I will do it, and keep the account for you." So here was the firſt *ſteward*. Afterwards I deſired one or two more to help me as ſtewards, and in proceſs of time a greater number.

Let

Let it be remarked, it was I *myſelf*, not the *people*, who choſe theſe ſtewards, and appointed to each the diſtinct work wherein he was to help me, as long as I deſired. And herein I began to exerciſe another ſort of *power*, namely, that of appointing and removing ſtewards.

3. After a time a young man came, *T. Maxfield*, and ſaid he deſired to help me as a ſon in the goſpel. Soon after came a ſecond, *Thomas Richards*, and a third, *Thomas Weſtel*. Theſe ſeverally deſired to ſerve me as ſons, and to labour when and where I ſhould direct. *Obſerve*, Theſe likewiſe deſired *me*, not I *them*. But I durſt not refuſe the aſſiſtance. And here commenced my *power*, to appoint each of theſe, *when*, *where* and *how* to labour; that is, while he choſe to continue with me: for each had a power to go away when he pleaſed: as I had alſo to go away from them, or any of them, if I ſaw ſufficient cauſe. The caſe continued the ſame, when the number of preachers increaſed. I had juſt the ſame power ſtill, to appoint *when*, and *where*, and *how* each ſhould help me, and to tell any, if I ſaw cauſe, "I do not deſire your help any longer." On theſe terms, and no other, we joined at firſt: on theſe we continue joined. But they do me no favour in being directed by me. It is true, "My reward is with the Lord." But at preſent I have nothing from it but trouble and care, and often a burden I ſcarce know how to bear.

4. In 1744 I wrote to several clergymen, and to all who then served me as sons in the gospel, desiring them to meet me in *London*, to give me their advice concerning the best method of carrying on the work of God. *They* did not desire this meeting, but *I* did, knowing that *in a multitude of counsellors there is safety*. And when their number increased, so that is was neither needful nor convenient to invite them all, for several years I wrote to those with whom I desired to confer, and these only met at the place appointed; till at length I gave a general permission, that all who desired it might come.

Observe, I myself sent for these of my own free choice; and I sent for them to *advise*, not *govern* me. Neither did I at any of those times divest myself of any part of that *power* above described, which the providence of God had cast upon me, without any design or choice of mine.

What is that power? It is a power of *admitting into* and *excluding from* the societies under my care; of choosing and removing *stewards*, of receiving or not receiving *helpers*; of appointing them *when*, *where* and *how* to help me; and of desiring any of them to meet me when I see good. And as it was merely in obedience to the providence of God, and for the good of the people, that I at first accepted this power, which I never sought, nay an hundred times laboured to throw off, so it is on the same considerations,

not

not for profit, honour or pleafure, that I ufe it at this day.

5. But feveral gentlemen are much offended at my having *fo much* power. My anfwer to them is this.

I did not feek any part of this power : it came upon me unawares. But when it was come, not daring to bury that talent, I ufed it to the beft of my judgment.

Yet I never was fond of it. I always did, and do now bear it as my burden : the burden which God lays upon me, and therefore I dare not yet lay it down.

But if you can tell me any one, or any five men, to whom I may transfer this burden, who *can* and *will* do juft what I do now, I will heartily thank both them and you.

6. But fome of our *helpers* fay, " This is *fhackling freeborn Engliſhmen* ;" and demand a *free conference* ; that is, a meeting of all the preachers, wherein all things fhall be determined by moft votes.

I anfwer: it is poffible after my death fomething of this kind may take place. But not while I live. To *me* the preachers have engaged themfelves to fubmit, to " ferve me as *fons in the gofpel.*" But they are not thus engaged to any man, or number of men befides. To *me* the people in general will fubmit. But they will not yet fubmit to any other.

It is nonſenſe then to call my uſing *this power*, " Shackling freeborn *Engliſhmen*." None needs to ſubmit to it unleſs he *will*: ſo there is no ſhackling in the caſe. Every preacher, and every member, may leave me when he pleaſes. But while he chooſes to ſtay, it is on the ſame terms that he joined me at firſt.

" But this is *arbitrary power*; this is no leſs than *making yourſelf a Pope*."

If by *arbitrary* power you mean a power which I exerciſe *ſingle*, without any collegues therein, this is certainly true: but I ſee no hurt in it. *Arbitrary* in this ſenſe is a very harmleſs word. If you mean, *unjuſt*, *unreaſonable*, or *tyrannical*, then it is not true.

As to the other branch of the charge, it carries no face of truth. The Pope affirms that every Chriſtian muſt do all he bids, and believe all he ſays, under pain of damnation. I never affirmed any thing that bears any, the moſt diſtant reſemblance to this. All I affirm is, " The preachers who chooſe to labour with me, chooſe to ſerve me as ſons in the goſpel." And " the people who chooſe to be under my care, chooſe to be ſo on the ſame terms they were at firſt."

Therefore all talk of this kind is highly injurious to *me*, who bear this burden merely for *your* ſakes. And it is exceeding miſchievous to the people, tending to confound their underſtandings, and to fill their hearts with evil-ſurmiſings and unkind tempers towards *me*: to whom they really

owe

owe more, for taking all this load upon me, for exercising this very *power*, for shakling myself in this manner, than for all my preaching put together. Preaching twice or thrice a day is no burden to me at all; but the care of all the preachers and all the people, is a burden indeed!

Q. 78. What can be done in order to the future union of the *Methodists?*

A. On *Friday*, *August* 4, 1769, Mr. *Wesley* read in the conference the following paper.

1. IT has long been my desire, that all those ministers of our church, who believe and preach salvation by faith, might cordially agree between themselves, and not hinder, but help one another. After occasionally pressing this in private conversation, wherever I had opportunity, I wrote down my thoughts upon this head, and sent them to each in a letter. Out of *fifty* or *sixty* to whom I wrote, only *three* vouchsafed me an answer. So I gave this up. I can do no more. They are a rope of sand; and such they will continue.

2. But it is otherwise with the *travelling preachers* in our connection: you are at present one body. You act in concert with each other, and by united counsels. And now is the time to consider what can be done, in order to continue this union? Indeed, as long as I live, there will be no great difficulty: I am, under God, a centre of union to all our *travelling*, as well as *local* preachers.

They all know me and my communication. They all love me for my work's ſake : and therefore, were it only out of regard to me, they will continue connected with each other. But by what means may this connection be preſerved, when God removes me from you ?

3. I take it for granted, it cannot be preſerved, by any means, between thoſe who have not a ſingle eye. Thoſe who aim at any thing but the glory of God, and the ſalvation of men : who deſire, or ſeek any earthly thing, whether honour, profit, or eaſe, will not, cannot continue in the connection ; it will not anſwer their deſign. Some of them, perhaps a *fourth* of the whole number, will procure preferment in the church. Others will turn independents, and get ſeparate congregations, like *John Edwards* and *Charles Skelton*. Lay your accounts with this, and be not ſurpriſed if ſome you do not ſuſpect be of this number.

4. But what method can be taken to preſerve a firm union between thoſe who chooſe to remain together ?

Perhaps you might take ſome ſuch ſteps as theſe :

On notice of my death, let all the preachers in *England* and *Ireland*, repair to *London* within *ſix* weeks.

Let them ſeek God by ſolemn faſting and prayer.

Let

Let them draw up articles of agreement, to be ſigned by thoſe who chooſe to act in concert.

Let thoſe be diſmiſſed who do not chooſe it, in the moſt friendly manner poſſible.

Let them chooſe, by votes, a *committee* of three, five, or ſeven, each of whom is to be *moderator* in his turn.

Let the committee do what I do now: propoſe *preachers* to be *tried*, *admitted*, or *excluded*: fix the place of each preacher for the enſuing year, and the time of the next conference.

5. Can any thing be done now, in order to lay a foundation for this future union? Would it not be well, for any that are willing, to ſign ſome articles of agreement before God calls me hence? Suppoſe ſomething like theſe:

"We, whoſe names are underwritten, being thoroughly convinced of the neceſſity of a cloſe union between thoſe whom God is pleaſed to uſe as inſtruments in this glorious work, in order to preſerve this union between ourſelves, are reſolved, God being our helper.

"I. *To devote ourſelves entirely to* God; denying ourſelves, taking up our croſs daily, ſteadily aiming at one thing, *to ſave our own ſouls, and them that hear us.*

"II. To preach the *old Methodiſt doctrines*, and no other, contained in the minutes of the conferences.

"III. To

" III. To obſerve and enforce the whole " *Methodiſt diſcipline*, laid down in the ſaid mi- " nutes."

Q. 79. What can be done in order to revive the work of God where it is decayed?

A. 1. See that no circuit be at any time without preachers. Therefore let no preacher, who does not attend the conference, leave the circuit at that time on any pretence whatever. This is the moſt improper time in the whole year. Let every aſſiſtant ſee to this, and require each of theſe to remain in the circuit till the new preachers come.

Let not all the preachers in any circuit come to the conference.

Let thoſe who do come, ſet out as late as poſſible, and return as ſoon as poſſible.

2. Be more diligent in field-preaching. The want of preaching abroad, and of preaching in new places, has greatly damped the work of God.

3. Wherever we have a large preaching-houſe at one end of a great town, let us preach abroad at the other end of it, every *Sunday* morning at leaſt.

4. Be more diligent in morning-preaching, wherever you can have twenty hearers.

5. Be more active in diſperſing the books: particularly the ſermon on the *Good Steward*, on *In-being Sin*, the *Repentance of Believers*, and the *Scripture Way of Salvation*. Every aſſiſtant may give

give away ſmall tracts. And he may beg money of the rich to buy books for the poor.

6. Let every preacher ſtrongly inſiſt upon practical religion and relative duties: but in ſuch a manner as to keep Chriſt continually in view.

7. Exhort the leaders of bands to ſpeak to thoſe with them in the cloſeſt manner poſſible.

8. Encourage all at the public meeting of the bands to ſpeak with all openneſs and ſimplicity.

9. Let a faſt be obſerved in all our ſocieties on the laſt *Friday* in *September*, and on the *Friday* after *New Year's Day*, after *Lady-day*, and after *Midſummer-day*.

10. Wherever you can, uſe interceſſion on *Friday*, and recommend *faſting* both by precept and example.

11. Be conſcientiouſly exact in the whole Methodiſt diſcipline. And that you may underſtand it, read over carefully *The plain account of the people called Methodiſts*, and the ſeveral *Minutes of the* CONFERENCES.

12. Beware of *formality* in ſinging, or it will creep in upon us unawares. Is it not creeping in already, by thoſe complex tunes, which it is ſcarce poſſible to ſing with devotion? Such is "Praiſe ye the Lord ye bleſſed ones:" ſuch the long quavering *hallelujah* annexed to the morning ſong-tune, which I defy any man living to ſing devoutly. The repeating the ſame word ſo often, (but eſpecially while another repeats different words, the horrid abuſe which runs through

through the modern church muſic) as it ſhocks all common ſenſe, ſo it neceſſarily brings in dead formality, and has no more of religion in it than a *Lancaſhire* hornpipe. Beſide that, it is a flat contradiction to our Lord's command, "Uſe not vain repetitions." For what is vain repetition, if this is not? What end of devotion does it ſerve? Again, Do not ſuffer the people to ſing too ſlow. This naturally tends to formality, and is brought in by thoſe who have very ſtrong, or very weak voices. Is it not poſſible, that all the *Methodiſts* in the nation ſhould ſing equally quick? Why ſhould not the aſſiſtant ſee that they be taught to ſing in every large ſociety? And do this in ſuch a manner, as to obviate the ill effects which might otherwiſe ſpring therefrom?

13. Which of us "faſts every *Friday* in the year?" Which of us faſts at all? Does not this ſhew the preſent temper of our minds, (though not of all) ſoft and unnerved? How then can we advance the work of God, though we may preach *loud* and *long* enough? Here is the root of the evil. Hence the work of God droops; few are convinced, few juſtified, few of our brethren ſanctified! Hence more and more doubt, if we are to be ſanctified at all till death: I mean ſanctified throughout, ſaved from all ſin, perfected in love. * That we *may all ſpeak the ſame thing*, I aſk once for all, Shall we defend this perfection or give it up? You all agree to defend it; meaning thereby, as we did from the beginning,

beginning, ſalvation from all ſin, by the love of God and our neighbour filling the heart. The *Papiſts* ſay, "This cannot be attained till we have been a ſufficient time in purgatory." The *Diſſenters* ſay, "Nay, it will be attained as ſoon as the ſoul and body part." The *old Methodiſts* ſaid, "It may be attained *before* we die: a moment after is too late." Is it ſo or no? You are all agreed, we may be ſaved from all ſin *before death*. The ſubſtance then is ſettled. But as to the circumſtance, is the change inſtantaneous or gradual? It is both one and the other. From the moment we are juſtified, there may be a *gradual ſanctification* or a growing in grace, a *daily* advance in the knowledge and love of God. And if ſin ceaſe before death, there muſt in the nature of the thing be an inſtantaneous change. There muſt be a laſt moment wherein it does exiſt, and a firſt moment wherein it does not. But ſhould we in preaching inſiſt on both one and the other? Certainly we muſt inſiſt on the *gradual change*; and that earneſtly and continually. And are there not reaſons why we ſhould inſiſt on the *inſtantaneous* alſo? If there be ſuch a bleſſed change before death, ſhould we not encourage all believers to expect it? And the rather, becauſe conſtant experience ſhews, the more earneſtly they expect this, the more ſwiftly and ſteadily does the gradual work of God go on in their ſouls. The more watchful they are againſt all ſin, the more careful to grow in grace,

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the more zealous of good works, and the more punctual in their attendance on all the ordinances of God: whereas just the contrary effects are observed, whenever this expectation ceases. They are *saved by hope*, by this hope of a total change saved with a gradually increasing salvation. Destroy this hope, and that salvation stands still; or rather decreases daily. Therefore whoever would advance the *gradual* change in believers, should strongly insist upon the *instantaneous*.

* 14. But how far from intire sanctification are we still? The religion of the *Methodists* in general, is not internal, at least, not deep, universal, uniform; but superficial, partial, uneven. And what pains do we take to make it otherwise? Do we visit from house to house, according to the plan laid down in the minutes? Have *you* done this? Mr. *Colley* begun. But he is gone to paradise. And who has trod in his steps? What hinders? Want of time? Only (as *William Pennington* said) spend half the time in *this visiting*, which you spend in talking uselessly, and you will have time enough. Do this, particularly in confirming and building up believers. Then, and not till then, the work of the Lord will prosper in your hands.

15. But what can we do for the *rising generation?* Unless we can take care of these, the present revival of religion will be *res unius ætatis:* it will last only the age of a man, who will *labour*

bour herein? Let him that is zealous for God and the ſouls of men begin *now*.

" 1. Spend an hour a week with the children " in every large town; whether you like it " or no.

" 2. Talk with them every time you ſee any " at home.

" 3. Pray in earneſt for them.

" 4. Diligently inſtruct and vehemently exhort " all parents, at their own houſes.

" 5. Preach expreſly on education, particularly " at *Midſummer*, when you ſpeak of *Kingſwood*."

* 16. Let every preacher read carefully over the life of Mr. *Brainerd*. Let us *be followers of him, as he was of* Chriſt, in abſolute ſelf-devotion, in total deadneſs to the world, and in fervent love to God and man. We want nothing but this. Then the world and the devil muſt fall under our feet.

17. 1. Let us keep to the church. Over and above all the reaſons that were formerly given for this, we add another now from long experience, they that leave the church leave the Methodiſts. The clergy cannot ſeparate us from our brethren, the diſſenting miniſters can and do. Therefore carefully avoid whatever has a tendency to ſeparate men from the church. In particular, preaching at any hour which hinders them from going to it. Let every *aſſiſtant* look to this.

2. Let all the ſervants in our preaching-houſes go to church on *Sunday* morning at leaſt.

3. Let

3. Let every preacher go always on *Sunday* morning, and when he can in the afternoon. God will bleſs thoſe who go on week days too, as often as they have opportunity.

18. Take heed to your doctrine.

We ſaid in 1744, "We have leaned too much toward Calviniſm." Wherein?

1. With regard to *man's faithfulneſs*. Our Lord himſelf taught us to uſe the expreſſion. And we ought never to be aſhamed of it. We ought ſteadily to aſſert, on his authority, that if a man is not *faithful in the unrighteous mammon*, God will not *give him the true riches*.

2. With regard to *working for life*. This alſo our Lord has expreſly commanded us. *Labour* —ἐργάζεσθε, literally, *work for the meat that endureth to everlaſting life*. And in fact every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for* as well as *from* life.

3. We have received it as a maxim, that "a man is to do nothing, *in order to* juſtification:" nothing can be more falſe. Whoever deſires to find favour with God, ſhould *ceaſe from evil, and learn to do well*. Whoever repents, ſhould do *works meet for repentance*. And if this is not *in order* to find favour, what does he do them for?

Review the whole affair.

1. Who of us is *now* accepted of God?

He that now believes in Chriſt, with a loving obedient heart.

2. But

2. But who among thoſe that never heard of Chriſt?

He *that feareth* God, *and worketh righteouſneſs*, according to the light he has.

3. Is this the ſame with "he that is ſincere?"

Nearly, if not quite.

4. Is not this "ſalvation by works?"

Not by the *merit* of works, but *by* works, as a *condition*.

5. What have we then been diſputing about for theſe thirty years?

I am afraid, *about words*.

6. As to *merit* itſelf, of which we have been ſo dreadfully afraid: we are rewarded, *according to our works*, yea, *becauſe of our works*. How does this differ from *for the ſake of our works?* And how differs this from *ſecundum merita operum?* As our works *deſerve?* Can you ſplit this hair? I doubt, I cannot.

7. The grand objection to one of the preceding propoſitions, is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact juſtify thoſe, who by their own confeſſion, neither feared God nor wrought righteouſneſs. Is this an exception to the general rule?

It is a doubt, whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we ſure, that the perſon in queſtion never did fear God and work righteouſneſs? His own ſaying ſo is not proof: For we know, how all that are convinced of ſin, undervalue themſelves in every reſpect.

8. Does not talking of a *juſtified* or a *ſanctified ſtate*,

ſtate, tend to miſlead men? Almoſt naturally leading them to truſt in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleaſing or diſpleaſing to God, *according to our works?* according to the whole of our inward tempers, and our outward behaviour.

19. Laſtly, We muſt needs viſit from houſe to houſe, were it only to avoid idleneſs. I am afraid, we are idle ſtill. Do we not loiter away many hours in every week? Try yourſelves. Keep a diary of your employment but for a week, and then read it over. Idleneſs cannot conſiſt with growth in grace. Nay, without exactneſs in *redeeming time*, it is impoſſible to retain even the life you received in juſtification.

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The CHARACTER of a

METHODIST.

Not as tho' I had already attained.

To the READER.

1. SINCE the name firſt came abroad into the world, many have been at a loſs to know what a *Methodiſt* is: what are the *principles* and the *practice* of thoſe, who are commonly called by that name; and what the *diſtinguiſhing marks* of this ſect, *which is every where ſpoken againſt.*

2. And it being generally believed, that I was able to give the cleareſt account of theſe things (as having been one of the firſt to whom that name was given, and the perſon by whom the reſt were ſuppoſed to be directed) I have been called upon, in all manner of ways, and with the utmoſt earneſtneſs ſo to do. I yield at laſt, to the

the continued importunity both of friends and enemies: and do now give the cleareſt account I can, in the preſence of the Lord and Judge of heaven and earth, of the *principles* and *practice* whereby thoſe who are called *Methodiſts*, are diſtinguiſhed from other men.

3. I ſay *thoſe who are* called *Methodiſts*; for let it be well obſerved, that this is not a name which they take to themſelves, but one fixt upon them by way of reproach, without their approbation or conſent. It was firſt given to three or four young men at *Oxford*, by a ſtudent of *Chriſt-Church*: either in alluſion to the antient ſect of phyſicians ſo called (from their teaching, that almoſt all diſeaſes might be cured by a *ſpecific method* of diet and exerciſe) or from their obſerving a more regular *method* of ſtudy and behaviour, than was uſual with thoſe of their age and ſtation.

4. I ſhould rejoice (ſo little ambitious am I to be at the head of any ſect or party) if the very name might never be mentioned more, but be buried in eternal oblivion. But if that cannot be, at leaſt let thoſe who will uſe it, know the meaning of the word they uſe. Let us not always be fighting in the dark. Come, and let us look one another in the face. And perhaps ſome of you who hate *what* I *am called*, may love what I *am* (by the grace of God:) or, rather what *I follow after*, *if that I may apprehend that*, *for which alſo I am apprehended of* Chriſt Jeſus.

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The CHARACTER *of a* METHODIST.

1. THE *diſtinguiſhing marks* of a *Methodiſt* are not, his *opinions* of any ſort. His aſſenting to this or that ſcheme of religion, his embracing any particular ſet of notions, his eſpouſing the judgment of one man or of another, are all quite wide of the point. Whoſoever therefore imagines, that a *Methodiſt* is, a man of ſuch or ſuch an *opinion*, is groſsly ignorant of the whole affair; he miſtakes the truth totally. We believe indeed, that *all ſcripture is given by the inſpiration of God*, and herein we are diſtinguiſhed from *Jews*, *Turks*, and *Infidels*. We believe the written word of God to be the *only and ſufficient* rule, both of Chriſtian faith and practice; and herein we are fundamentally diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of the *Romiſh church*. We believe Chriſt to be the eternal ſupreme God; and herein we are diſtinguiſhed from the *Socinians* and *Arians*. But as to all opinions which do not ſtrike at the root of Chriſtianity, we think and let think. So that whatſoever they are, whether right or wrong, they are no *diſtinguiſhed marks of a Methodiſt*.

2. Neither are *words* or *phraſes* of any ſort. We do not place our religion, or any part of it, in being attached to any peculiar mode of ſpeaking, any quaint or common ſet of expreſſions.

The moſt obvious, eaſy, common words, wherein our meaning can be conveyed, we prefer before others, both on ordinary occaſions, and when we ſpeak of the things of God. We never therefore willingly or deſignedly deviate from the moſt uſual way of ſpeaking; unleſs when we expreſs ſcripture truths in ſcripture words, (which we preſume no Chriſtian will condemn) Neither do we affect to uſe any particular expreſſions of ſcripture, more frequently than others, unleſs they are ſuch as are more frequently uſed by the inſpired writers themſelves. So that it is as groſs an error, to place the marks of a *Methodiſt* in his *words*, as in *opinions* of any ſort.

3. Nor do we deſire to be diſtinguiſhed by *actions*, *cuſtoms*, or *uſages*, of an *indifferent* nature. Our religion does not lie in doing what God has not enjoined, or abſtaining from what he hath not forbidden. It does not lie in the form of our apparel, in the poſture of our body, or the covering of our heads; nor yet in abſtaining from marriage, or from meats and drinks, which are all good if received with thankſgiving. Therefore neither will any man who knows whereof he affirms, fix the mark of a *Methodiſt* here; in any actions or cuſtoms purely indifferent, undetermined by the *word of* God.

4. Nor, laſtly, is he diſtinguiſhed by laying the *whole ſtreſs* of religion on any ſingle part of it. If you ſay, "Yes, he is, for he thinks *we are ſaved by faith alone*." I anſwer, you do not underſtand

ſtand the terms. By *ſalvation* he means, holineſs of heart and *life*. And this he affirms to ſpring from true faith alone. Can even a nominal Chriſtian deny it? Is this placing a part of religion for the whole? *Do we then make void the law thro' faith? God forbid! Yea we eſtabliſh the law.* We do not place the whole of religion (as too many do, God knoweth) either in doing no harm, or in doing good, or in uſing the ordinances of God. No, not in all of them together wherein we know by experience a man may labour many years, and at the end have no true religion at all, no more than he had at the beginning. Much leſs in any one of theſe: or, it may be in a ſcrap of one of them: like her who fancies herſelf a *virtuous* woman, only becauſe ſhe is not a proſtitute; or him who dreams he is an *honeſt* man, merely becauſe he does not rob or ſteal. May the Lord God of my Fathers preſerve me, from ſuch a poor, ſtarved religion as this! Were this the *mark* of a *Methodiſt*, I would ſooner chuſe to be a ſincere *Jew*, *Turk*, or *Pagan*.

5. "What then is the *mark?* Who is a *Methodiſt* according to your own account?" I anſwer: A *Methodiſt* is one, who has *the love of God ſhed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Ghoſt given unto him:* one who *loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his ſoul, and with all his mind, and with all his ſtrength.* God is the joy of his heart, and the deſire of his ſoul: which is conſtantly crying out, "*Whom have I*

in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! My God and my all! Thou art the strength of my heart and my portion for ever!"

6. He is therefore happy in God, yea always happy, as having in him *a well of water springing up into everlasting life, and overflowing his soul with peace and joy. Perfect love* having now *cast out fear*, he *rejoices evermore.* He *rejoices in the* Lord *always*, even *in* God *his Saviour:* and in the Father, *through our* Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom he hath now received the atonement. Having* found *redemption thro' his blood, the forgiveness of his sins*, he cannot but rejoice, whenever he looks back on the horrible pit out of which he is delivered, when he sees *all his transgressions blotted out as a cloud, and his iniquities as a thick cloud.* He cannot but rejoice, whenever he looks on the state wherein he now is, *being justified freely, and having peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* For *he that believeth hath the witness* of this *in himself:* being now *the Son of God by faith: because he is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba Father!* And *the Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God.* He rejoiceth also, whenever he looks forward, *in hope of the glory that shall be revealed:* yea, this his joy is full, and all his bones cry out, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mer-*

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cy hath begotten me *again to a living hope—of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for* me.

7. And he who hath this *hope*, thus *full of immortality, in every thing giveth thanks:* as knowthat *this* (whatsoever it is) *is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning him.* From him therefore he *chearfully* receives all, saying, *Good is the will of the Lord:* and whether the Lord giveth or taketh away, equally *blessing the name of the Lord.* For he hath *learned in whatsoever state he is, therewith to be content.* He knoweth *both how to be abased, and how to abound. Every where and in all things he is instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need.* Whether in ease or pain, whether in sickness or health, whether in life or death, he giveth thanks from the ground of the heart to him, who orders it for good: knowing that as *every good gift cometh from above,* so none but good can come *from the Father of lights,* into whose hand he has wholly committed his body and soul, as into the hands of a faithful Creator. He is therefore *careful* (anxiously or uneasily) *for nothing:* as having *cast all his care on him that careth for him,* and *in all things* resting on him, after *making his request known to him with thanksgiving.*

8. For indeed he *prays without ceasing.* It is given him *always to pray and not to faint.* Not that he is always in the house of prayer: though he neglects no opportunity of being there. Neither is

he always on his knees, although he often is, or on his face, before the Lord his God. Nor yet is he always crying aloud to God, or calling upon him in words. For many times *the Spirit maketh intercession for him with groans that cannot be uttered:* but at all times the language of his heart is this, "Thou brightness of the eternal glory, unto thee is my mouth, though without a voice, and my silence speaketh unto thee." And this is true prayer, and this alone. But his heart is ever lifted up to God, at all times and in all places. In this he is never hindered, much less interrupted by any person or thing. In retirement, or company, in leisure, business or conversation, his heart is ever with the Lord. Whether he lie down or rise up, God *is in all his thoughts*; *he walks with* God continually, having the loving eye of his mind still fixed upon him, and every where *seeing him that is invisible.*

9. And while he thus always exercises his love to God, by praying without ceasing, rejoicing evermore and in every thing giving thanks, this commandment is written in his heart, that he who loveth God, love his brother also. And he accordingly loves his neighbour as himself; he loves every man as his own soul. His heart is full of love to all mankind, to every child of *the Father of the Spirits of all flesh.* That a man is not personally known to him, is no bar to his love: no, nor that he is known to be such as he approves not, that he repays hatred for his good-

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will. For he *loves his enemies*, yea and the enemies of God: *the evil and the unthankful.* And if it be not in his power to do good to them that hate him, yet he ceaſes not to pray for them, though they continue to ſpurn his love, and ſtill *deſpitefully uſe him and perſecute him.*

10. For he is *pure in heart.* The love of God has purified his heart from all revengeful paſſions, from envy, malice, and wrath, from every unkind temper or malign affection. It hath cleanſed him from pride and haughtineſs of ſpirit, whereof alone cometh contention. And he hath now put on bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering: ſo that he *forbears and forgives, if he had a quarrel againſt any; even as God in Chriſt hath forgiven him.* And indeed all poſſible ground for contention, on his part, is utterly cut off. For none can take from him what he deſires; ſeeing he *loves not the world, nor* any *of the things of the world*; being now *crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him*; being dead to all, that is in the world, both to *the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life.* For *all his deſire is unto* God and to the remembrance of his name.

11. Agreeable to this his one deſire, is the one deſign of his life, namely, *not to do his own will, but the will of him that ſent him.* His one intention at all times and in all things is, not to pleaſe himſelf, but him whom his ſoul loveth. He has a ſingle eye. And becauſe *his eye is ſingle, his*

whole body is full of light. Indeed where the loving eye of the soul is continually fixed upon God, there can be no darkness at all, *but the whole is light; as when the bright shining of a candle doth enlighten the house.* God then reigns alone. All that is in the soul is holiness to the Lord. There is not a motion in his heart, but is according to his will. Every thought that arises points to him, and is in obedience to the law of Christ.

12. And the tree is known by its fruits. For as he loves God, so he keeps his commandments: not only some, or most of them, but all, from the least to the greatest. He is not content to *keep the whole law, and offend in one point;* but has in all points, *a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards man.* Whatever God has forbidden, he avoids; whatever God hath enjoined, he doth; and that whether it be little or great, hard or easy, joyous or grievous to the flesh. He *runs the way of* God's *commandments,* now he hath set his *heart at liberty.* It is his glory so to do; it is his daily crown of rejoicing, *to do the will of* God *on earth, as it is done in heaven;* knowing it is the highest privilege of *the angels of* God, *of those that excel in strength, to fulfil his commandments, and hearken to the voice his word.*

13. All the commandments of God he accordingly keeps, and that with all his might. For his obedience is in proportion to his love, the source from

from whence it flows. And therefore, loving God with all his heart, he ſerves him with all his ſtrength. He continually preſents his ſoul and body, a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; entirely and without reſerve devoting himſelf, all he has, and all he is, to his glory. All the talents he has received, he conſtantly employs, according to his maſter's will; every power and faculty of his ſoul, every member of his body. Once he *yielded* them *unto ſin* and the devil, *as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs:* but now, *being a live from the dead, he yields* them all, *as inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto* God.

14. By conſequence, whatſoever he doth, it is all to the glory of God. In all his employments of every kind, he not only *aims* at this, (which is implied in having a ſingle eye) but actually *attains* it. His buſineſs and refreſhments, as well as his prayers, all ſerve this great end. Whether he ſit in his houſe or walk by the way, whether he lie down or riſe up, he is promoting in all he ſpeaks or does, the one buſineſs of his life: whether he put on his apparel, or labour, or eat and drink, or divert himſelf from too waſting labour, it all tends to advance the glory of God, by peace and good will among men. His one invariable rule is this, *Whatſoever ye do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the* Lord Jeſus, *giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

15. Nor do the cuſtoms of the world at all hinder his *running the race that is ſet before him.* He knows, that vice does not loſe its nature, though it becomes ever ſo faſhionable; and remembers, that *every man is to give an account of himſelf to* God. He cannot therefore, *follow even a multitude to do evil.* He cannot *fare ſumptuouſly every day*, or *make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof.* He cannot *lay up treaſures upon earth*, no more than he can take fire into his boſom. He cannot *adorn himſelf* (on any pretence) *with gold or coſtly apparel,—he* cannot join in, or countenance any diverſion, which has the leaſt tendency to vice of any kind. He cannot *ſpeak evil* of his neighbour, no more than he can lie, either for God or man. He cannot utter an unkind word of any one; for love keeps the door of his lips. He cannot ſpeak *idle words: no corrupt communication* ever *comes out of his mouth*, as is all that *which is* not *good, to the uſe of edifying*, not *fit to miniſter grace to the hearers.* But *whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are* juſtly *of good report*, he thinks, and ſpeaks, and acts, *adorning the goſpel of our* Lord Jeſus Chriſt *in all things.*

16. Laſtly, As he has time, he *does good unto all men*; unto neighbours and ſtrangers, friends and enemies. And that in every poſſible kind; not only to their bodies, by *feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, viſiting thoſe that are ſick or*

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in prison; but much more does he labour to do good to their souls, as of the ability which God giveth: to awaken those that sleep in death: to bring those who are awakened to the atoning blood, that *being justified by* faith, they may have *peace with* God, to abound more in love and in good works. And he is willing to *spend and be spent herein*, even *to be offered up on the sacrifice and service of their faith*, so they may *all come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of* Christ.

17. These are the *principles* and *practices* of our *sect*, these are the *marks* of a true *Methodist*. By these alone do those, who are in derision so called, desire to be distinguished from other men. If any man say, "Why these are only the common, fundamental principles of Christianity!" *Thou hast said:* so I mean; this is the very truth; I know they are no other; and I would to God both thou and all men knew, that I, and all who follow my judgment, do vehemently refuse to be distinguished from other men, by any but the common principles of Christianity. The plain, old Christianity that I teach, renouncing and detesting all other marks of distinction. And whosoever *is* what I *preach* (let him be called what he will; for names change not the nature of things) he is a Christian, not in *name* only, but in *heart* and in *life*. He is inwardly and outwardly conformed to the will

of God, as revealed in the written word. He thinks, ſpeaks, and lives according to the method laid down in the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt. His ſoul is renewed after the image of God, in righteouſneſs and in all true holineſs. And having the mind that was in Chriſt, he ſo walks as Chriſt alſo walked.

18. By theſe *marks*, by theſe fruits of a living faith, do we labour to *diſtinguiſh* ourſelves from the unbelieving world, from all thoſe whoſe minds or lives are not according to the goſpel of Chriſt. But from real Chriſtians, of whatſoever denomination they be, we earneſtly deſire not to be diſtinguiſhed at all: not from any, who ſincerely follow after what they know they have not yet attained. No: whoſoever doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the ſame is my brother, and ſiſter and mother. And I beſeech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that we be in no wiſe divided among ourſelves. Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? I aſk no farther queſtion. If it be, give me thy hand. For opinions, or terms, let us not deſtroy the work of God. Doſt thou love and ſerve God? It is enough. I give thee the right hand of fellowſhip. If there be any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies: let us ſtrive together for the faith of the goſpel; walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called; with

with all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace: remembring, there is one body, and one ſpirit, even as we are called with one hope of our calling: *one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all!*

A ſhort HISTORY of

METHODISM.

1. IT is not eaſy to reckon up the various accounts which have been given of the people called *Methodiſts:* very many of them as far remote from truth, as that given by the good gentleman in *Ireland.* "*Methodiſts!* Ay, they are the people, who place all religion in *wearing long beards.*"

2. Abundance of the miſtakes which are current concerning them, have undoubtedly ſprung from this: men lump together under this general name many who have no manner of connexion with each other: and then whatever any of theſe ſpeaks or does, is of courſe imputed to all.

3. The following ſhort account may prevent perſons of a calm and candid diſpoſition from doing this: although men of a warm or prejudiced ſpirit will do juſt as they did before. But let it be

be obſerved, this is not deſigned for a *defence* of the *Methodiſts* (ſo called) or any part of them. It is a bare *relation* of a ſeries of naked facts, which alone may remove abundance of miſunderſtandings.

In *November* 1729, four young gentlemen of *Oxford*, Mr. *John Weſley*, fellow of *Lincoln*-College, Mr. *Charles Weſley*, ſtudent of *Chriſt-Church*, Mr. *Morgan*, commoner of *Chriſt-church*, and Mr. *Kirkham*, of *Merton*-College, began to ſpend ſome evenings in a week together, in reading, chiefly the *Greek Teſtament*. The next year two or three of Mr. *John Weſley*'s pupils deſired the liberty of meeting with them: and afterwards one of Mr. *Charles Weſley*'s pupils. It was in 1732, that Mr. *Ingham*, of *Queen*'s-College, and Mr. *Broughton*, of *Exeter*, were added to their number. To theſe, in *April*, was joined Mr. *Clayton*, of *Brazen-noſe*, with two or three of his pupils. About the ſame time Mr. *James Hervey* was permitted to meet with them, and in 1735 Mr. *Whitefield*.

5. The exact regularity of their lives, as well as ſtudies, occaſioned a young gentleman of *Chriſt-church* to ſay, "Here is a new ſet of *Methodiſts* ſprung up:" alluding to ſome antient phyſicians who were ſo called. The name was new and quaint: ſo it took immediately, and the *Methodiſts* were known all over the univerſity.

6. They

6. They were all zealous members of the church of *England*, not only tenacious of all her doctrines, ſo far as they knew them, but of all her diſcipline, to the minuteſt circumſtance. They were likewiſe zealous obſervers of all the univerſity-ſtatutes, and that for conſcience ſake. But they obſerved neither theſe nor any thing elſe any further than they conceived it was bound upon them by that one book, *the bible*; it being their one deſire and deſign to be downright *bible Chriſtians*: taking the bible, as interpreted by the primitive church and our own, for their whole and ſole rule.

7. The one charge then advanced againſt them was, That they were *righteous overmuch*; that they were abundanly too ſcrupulous, and too ſtrict, carrying things to great extremes. In particular, that they laid too much ſtreſs upon the rubrics and canons of the church; that they inſiſted too much on obſerving the ſtatutes of the univerſity: and that they took the ſcriptures in too ſtrict and literal a ſenſe: ſo that if they were right, *few* indeed would *be ſaved*.

8. In *October* 1735, Mr. *John* and *Charles Weſley*, and Mr. *Ingham*, left *England*, with a deſign to go and preach to the *Indians* in *Georgia*. But the reſt of the gentlemen continued to meet, till one and another was ordained and left the univerſity. By which means, in about two years time, ſcarce any of them were left.

9. In

9. In *February* 1738, Mr. *Whitefield* went over to *Georgia*, with a design to assist Mr. *John Wesley*; but Mr. *Wesley* just then returned to *England*. Soon after he had a meeting with Messr. *Ingham*, *Stonhouse*, *Hall*, *Hutchings*, *Kinchin*, and a few other clergymen, who all appeared to be of one heart, as well as of one judgment, resolved to be *Bible-Christians* at all events, and, wherever they were, to preach with all their might, plain, old, Bible-Christianity.

10. They were hitherto perfectly regular in all things, and zealously attached to the *church* of *England*. Meantime they began to be convinced, that *by grace we are saved through faith*; that justification by faith was the doctrine of the church, as well as of the bible. As soon as they *believed*, they *spake*; salvation by faith being now their standing topic. Indeed this implied three things, 1. That men are all by nature *dead in sin*, and consequently *children of wrath*. 2. That they are *justified by faith alone*. 3. That faith produces inward and outward holiness. And these points they insisted on, day and night. In a short time, they became popular preachers. The congregations were large wherever they preached. The former name was then revived. And all these gentlemen, with their followers, were intitled *Methodists*.

11. In *March* 1741, Mr. *Whitfield* being returned to *England*, entirely separated from Mr. *Wesley*

Weſley and his friends, "Becauſe he did not hold *the decrees*." Here was the firſt breach, which warm men perſuaded Mr. *Whitefield* to make, merely for a difference of opinion. Thoſe indeed who believed *univerſal redemption*, had no deſire at all to ſeparate. But thoſe who held *particular redemption*, would not hear of any accommodation, being determined to have no fellowſhip with men that "were in ſo dangerous errors." So there were now two ſorts of *Methodiſts*, ſo called; thoſe for *particular*, and thoſe for *general*, redemption.

12. Not many years paſſed, before *William Cudworth* and *James Relly* ſeparated from Mr. *Whitefield*. Theſe were properly *Antinomians*, abſolute, avowed enemies to the law of God, which they never preached or profeſſed to preach, but termed all *legaliſts* who did. With them, *preaching the law* was an abomination. They had *nothing to do* with the law. They would *preach Chriſt*, as they called it; but without one word either of holineſs or good works. Yet theſe were ſtill denominated *Methodiſts*, although differing from Mr. *Whitefield*, both in judgment and practice, abundantly more than Mr. *Whitefield* did from Mr. *Weſley*.

13. In the mean time, Mr. *Venn* and Mr. *Romaine* began to be ſpoken of: and not long after, Mr. *Madan* and Mr. *Berridge*, with a few other clergymen, who, although they had no connexion with each other, yet preaching *ſalva-*

tion

tion by faith, and endeavouring to live accordingly, to be *Bible Chriſtians*, were ſoon included in the general name of *Methodiſts*. And ſo indeed were all others who preached *ſalvation by faith*, and appeared more *ſerious* than their neighbours. Some of theſe were quite *regular* in their manner of preaching: ſome were quite *irregular* (though not by choice; but neceſſity was laid upon them; they muſt preach *irregularly*, or not at all:) and others were between both; regular in *moſt*, though not in *all* particulars.

14. In 1762, *George Bell*, and a few other perſons, began to ſpeak great words. In the latter end of the year, they foretold, that the world would be at an end on the 28th of *February*. Mr. *Weſley*, with whom they were then connected, withſtood them both in public and private. This they would not endure: ſo, in *January* and *February*, 1763, they ſeparated from him. Soon after Mr. *Maxfield*, one of Mr. *Weſley*'s preachers and ſeveral of the people left Mr. *Weſley:* but ſtill Mr. *Maxfield*, and his adherents, go under the general name of *Methodiſts*.

15. At preſent, thoſe who remain with Mr. *Weſley*, are moſtly *church* of *England* men. They love her articles, her homilies, her liturgy, her diſcipline, and unwillingly vary from it in any inſtance. Meantime, all who preach among them

them declare, *We are all by nature children of wrath.* But *by grace we are ſaved through faith:* ſaved both from the guilt and from the power of ſin. They endeavour to *live* according to what they preach, to be plain, *Bible-Chriſtians.* And they meet together at convenient times, to encourage one another therein. They tenderly love many that are *Calviniſts*, though they do not love their opinions. Yea, they love the *Antinomians* themſelves; but it is with a love of compaſſion only. For they hate their doctrines with a perfect hatred; they abhor them as they do hell-fire: being convinced nothing can ſo effectually deſtroy all faith, all holineſs, and all good works.

16. With regard to theſe, Mr. *Relly* and his adherents, it would not be ſtrange, if they ſhould grow into reputation. For they will never ſhock the world, either by the harſhneſs of their doctrine, or the ſingularity of their behaviour. But let thoſe who determine both to preach and to live the goſpel, expect that men will *ſay all manner of evil of them. The ſervant is not above his maſter, nor the diſciple above his Lord. If then they have called the maſter of the houſe Beelzebub, how much more them of his houſhold?* It is their duty indeed, *as much as lieth in them, to live peaceably with all men.* But when they labour after peace, the world will *make themſelves ready for battle.* It is their conſtant endeavour, to

pleaſe

pleaſe all men, for their good, to edification. But yet they know, it cannot be done: they remember the word of the apoſtle, *If I yet pleaſe men, I am not the ſervant of Chriſt.* They go on therefore, *through honour and diſhonour, through evil report and good report:* deſiring only, that their maſter may ſay in that day, "Servants of God, well done."

The End of the Fifteenth *Volume.*

THE

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